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# THE PHOENIX

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## EXCERPTS FROM

### D.H. LAWRENCE'S WAR LETTERS

The War finished me: it was the spear through the side of all sorrows and hopes. I had been walking in Westmorland, rather happy, with water-lilies twisted round my hat — big, heavy, white and gold water-lilies that we found in a pool high up — and girls who had come out on a spree and who were having tea in the upper room of an inn, shrieked with laughter. And I remember also we crouched under the loose wall on the moors and the rain flew by in streams, and the wind came rushing through the chinks in the wall behind one's head, and we shouted songs, and I imitated music-hall turns, whilst the other men crouched under the wall and I pranked in the rain on the turf in the gorse, and Koteliansky groaned Hebrew music — Ranani Sadekim Badanoi.

It seems like another life — we *were* happy — four men. Then we came down to Barrow-in-Furness, and saw that War was declared. And we all went mad. I can remember soldiers kissing on Barrow station, and a woman shouting defiantly to her sweetheart — “When you get at ’em, Clem, let ’em have it,”

as the train drew off — and in all the tramcars, “War.” Messrs. Vickers-Maxim call in their workmen — and the great notices on Vickers’ gateways — and the thousands of men streaming over the bridge. Then I went down the coast a few miles. And I think of the amazing sunsets over flat sands and the smoky sea — then of sailing in a fisherman’s boat, running in the wind against a heavy sea — and a French Onion boat coming in with her sails set splendidly, in the morning sunshine — and the electric suspense everywhere — and the amazing, vivid, visionary beauty of everything, heightened by the immense pain everywhere. And since then, since I came back, things have not existed for me. I have spoken to no one, I have touched no one, I have seen no one. All the while, I swear, my soul lay in the tomb — not dead, but with a flat stone over it, a corpse, become corpse-cold. And nobody existed, because I did not exist myself. Yet I was not dead — only passed over — trespassed — and all the time I knew I should have to rise again.

Now I am feeble and half alive. On the downs on Friday I opened my eyes again, and saw it was day-time. And I saw the sea lifted up and shining like a blade with the sun on it. And high up, in the icy wind, an aeroplane flew towards us from the land — and the men ploughing and the boys in the fields on the table-lands, and the shepherds, stood back from their work and lifted their faces. And the aeroplane was small and high, in the thin, ice-cold wind. And the



birds became silent and dashed to cover, afraid of the noise. And the aeroplane floated high out of sight. And below, on the level earth away down — were floods and stretches of snow, and I knew I was awake. But as yet my soul is cold and shaky and earthy.

I don't feel so hopeless now I am risen. My heart has been as cold as a lump of dead earth, all this time, because of the War. But now I don't feel so dead. I feel hopeful. I couldn't tell you how fragile and tender this hope is — the new shoot of life. But I feel hopeful now about the War. We should all rise again from this grave — though the killed soldiers will have to wait for the last trump . . . I know we shall all come through, rise again and walk healed and whole and new in a big inheritance, here on earth . . .

After the War, the soul of the people will be so maimed and so injured that it is horrible to think of. And this shall be the new hope: that there shall be a life wherein the struggle shall not be for money or for power, but for individual freedom and common effort towards good. That is surely the richest thing to have now — the feeling that one is working, that one is a part of a great, good effort or of a great effort towards goodness. It is no good plastering or tinkering with this community. Every strong soul must put off its connection with this society, its vanity and chiefly its fear, and go naked with its fellows, weaponless, armourless, without shield or spear, but only with

naked hands and open eyes. Not self-sacrifice, but fulfilment, the flesh and the spirit in league together, not in arms against one another. And each man shall know that he is part of the greater body, each man shall submit that his own soul is not supreme even to himself. "To be or not to be" is no longer the question. The question now is how shall we fulfil our declaration, "God is." For all our life is now based on the assumption that God is not — or except on rare occasions . . .

It is communism based, not on poverty but on riches, not on humility but on pride, not on sacrifice but upon complete fulfilment in the flesh of all strong desire, not in Heaven but on earth. We will be Sons of God who walk here on earth, not bent on getting and having, because we know we inherit all things. We will be aristocrats, and as wise as the serpent in dealing with the mob. For the mob shall not crush us nor starve us nor cry us to death. We will deal cunningly with the mob, the greedy soul, we will gradually bring it to subjection.

We will found an order, and we will all be Princes, as the angels are.

We must bring this about — at least set it into life . . .

Today we drove to Bognor. It was strange at Bognor — a white, vague, powerful sea, with long waves falling heavily, with a crash of frosty white out of the

pearly whiteness of the day, of the wide sea. And the small boats that were out in the distance heaved, and seemed to glisten shadowily. Strange the sea was, so strong. I saw a soldier on the pier, with only one leg. He was young and handsome: and strangely self-conscious, and slightly ostentatious: but confused. As yet, he does not realize anything, he is still in the shock. And he is strangely roused by the women, who seem to have a craving for him. They look at him with eyes of longing, and they want to talk to him. So he is roused, like a roused male, yet there is more wistfulness and wonder than passion or desire. I could see him under chloroform having the leg amputated. It was still in his face. But he was brown and strong and handsome.

It seemed to me anything might come out of that white, silent, opalescent sea; and the great icy shocks of foam were strange. I felt as if legions were marching in the mist. I cannot tell you why, but I am afraid. I am afraid of the ghosts of the dead. They seem to come marching home in legions over the white, silent sea, breaking in on us with a roar and a white iciness. Perhaps this is why I feel so afraid. I don't know. But the land beyond looked warm, with a warm, blue sky, very homely: and over the sea legions of white ghosts tramping. I was on the pier.

So they are making a Coalition government. I cannot tell you how icy cold my heart is with fear. It is as if we were all going to die. Did I not tell you my revolution would come? It will come, God help us.

The ghosts will bring it. Why does one feel so coldly afraid? Why does even the coalition of the Government fill me with terror? Some say it is for peace negotiations. It may be, because we are all afraid. But it is most probably for conscription. The touch of death is very cold and horrible on us all.

It is the whiteness of the ghost legions that is so awful . . .

Yesterday, at Worthing, there were many soldiers. Can I ever tell you how ugly they were . . . they remind me of lice or bugs . . . they are teeming insects. What massive creeping hell is let loose nowadays.

It isn't my disordered imagination. There is a wag-tail sitting on the gate-post. I see how sweet and swift heaven is. But hell is slow and creeping and viscous and insect-teeming: as is this Europe now, this England.

When we talked in Brighton, lying on the cliff, I did not take much notice of what I said, because my subconsciousness was occupied with the idea of how pleasant it would be to walk over the edge of the cliff. There seemed another, brighter sort of world away below, and this world on top is all torture and a flounder of stupidity . . .

For yourself, you must learn to believe in God. Believe me, in the end, we will unite in our knowledge



of God. Believe me, this England, we very English people, will at length join together and say, "We will not do these things, because in our knowledge of God we know them wrong." We shall put away our greatness and our living for material things only, because we shall agree we don't want these things. We know they are inferior, base, we shall have courage to put them away. We shall unite in our knowledge of God — not perhaps in our expression of God — but in our *knowledge* of God: and we shall agree that England does not care only to have the greatest Empire or the greatest commerce, but that she does care supremely for the pure truth of God, which she will try to fulfil.

This isn't ranting, it is pure reasoning from the knowledge of God and the truth. It is not our wickedness that kills us, but our unbelief . . .

This change must come to pass. But nobody will believe it, however obvious it is. So it almost sends me mad, I am almost a lunatic . . . please do believe that the thing *shall* be.

I've got again into one of those horrible sleeps from which I can't awake. I can't brush it aside to wake up. You know those horrible sleeps when one is struggling to wake up, and can't. I was like it all autumn — now I am again like it. Everything has a touch of delirium, the blackbird on the wall is a delirium, even the apple-blossom. And when I see a snake winding rapidly in the marshy places, I think I am mad.

It is not a question of me, it is the world of men. The world of men is dreaming, it has gone mad in its sleep, and a snake is strangling it, but it can't wake up.

When I read of the *Lusitania*, and of the riots in London, I know it is so. I think soon we must get up and try to stop it. Let us wait a little longer. Then when we cannot bear it any longer, we must try to wake up the world of men, which has gone mad in its sleep . . .

I have been reading *Van Gogh* — very sad. He couldn't get out of the trap, poor man, so he went mad. One can see it so plainly, what he wanted. He wanted that there should be a united impulse of all men in the fulfilment of one idea --- as in Giotto's and Cimabue's time. But in this world there is as yet only chaos. So he struggled to add one more term to the disorderly accumulation of knowledge. But it was not living. It was submitting himself to a process of reduction, which sent him mad. To live, we must all unite, and bring all knowledge into a coherent whole, we must all set to for the joining of the multifarious parts, we must knit all words together into a great new utterance, we must cast all personalities into the melting pot, and give a new Humanity its birth. Remember, it is not anything personal we want any more --- any of us. It is not honour nor personal satisfaction, it is the incorporation in the great impulse whereby a great people

shall come into being, a free race as well as a race of free individuals. The individual is now more free than the race. His race hurts him and cribs him in. No one man can create a new race. It needs all of us. So we must all unite for this purpose. It makes me quite glad to think how splendid it will be, when more and more of us fasten our hands on the chains, and pull, and pull, and break them apart.

One must always destroy the old Moloch of greediness and love of property and love of power. But think what a splendid world we shall have, when each man shall seek joy and understanding rather than getting and having.

Don't think *I* am important. But this thing which is of all of us is so important and splendid that the skies shiver with delight when it is mentioned. And don't be sceptical. We are the young. And it is only the young who can know a great cause . . .

The war is resolving itself into a war between Labour and Capital. Unless real leaders step forward, to lead in the light of a wide-embracing philosophy, there will be another French Revolution muddle. We shall never finish our fight with Germany . . .

I dreamed last night that all the stars were moving out of the sky. It was awful. Orion in particular went very fast, the other stars in a disorderly fashion, but

all trooping out of the sky, in haste, to the left hand. And some of them low down, took fire. I was very terrified, more terrified than I have ever been. There became a smoke and a burning . . .

We have lived a few days on the seashore, with the waves banging up at us. Also over the river, beyond the ferry, there is the flat silvery world, as in the beginning, untouched: with pale sand, and very much white foam, row after row, coming from under the sky, in the silver evening: and no people at all, no houses, no buildings, only a haystack on the edge of the shingle, and an old black mill. For the rest, the flat unfinished world running with foam and noise and silvery light, and a few gulls swinging like a half-born thought. It is great thing to realize that the original world is still there — perfectly clean and pure, many white advancing foams, and only the gulls swinging between the sky and the shore; and in the wind the yellow sea poppies fluttering very hard, like yellow gleams in the wind, and the windy flourish of the seed-horns.

It is this mass of unclean world that we have superimposed on the clean world that we cannot bear. When I looked back, out of the clearness of the open evening, at this Littlehampton dark and amorphous like a bad eruption on the edge of the land, I was so sick I felt I could not come back: all these amorphous houses like an eruption, a disease on the clean earth;



and all of them full of such a diseased spirit, every landlady harping on her money, her furniture, every visitor harping on his latitude of escape from money and furniture. The whole thing is like an active disease, fighting out the health. One watches them on the sea-shore, all the people, and there is something pathetic, almost wistful in them, as if they wished that their lives did *not* add up to this scaly nullity of possession, but as if they could not escape. It is a dragon that has devoured us all: these obscene, scaly houses, this insatiable struggle and desire to possess, to possess always and in spite of everything, this need to be an owner, lest one be owned. It is too horrible. One can no longer live with people: it is too hideous and nauseating. Owners and owned, they are like two sides of a ghastly disease. One feels a sort of madness come over one, as if the world had become hell. But it is only superimposed: it is only a temporary disease. It can be cleaned away . . .

One must destroy the spirit of money, the blind spirit of possession . . .

Are we never going to unite in one idea and one purpose? Is it to be a case of each one of us having his own private fling? That is nothing. If we are going to remain a group of separate entities separately engaged, then there is no reason why we should be a group at all. We are just individualists. And individuals do not *vitally* concern me any more. Only a *purpose* vitally

concerns me, not individuals — neither my own individual self, nor any other . . .

I am so sick of people: they preserve an evil, bad, separating spirit under the warm cloak of good words. That is intolerable in them. The Conservative talks about the old and glorious national ideal, the Liberal about this great struggle for right in which the nation is engaged, the peaceful women talk about disarmament and international peace . . . and all this, all this goodness, is just a warm and cosy cloak for a bad spirit. They all want the same thing: a continuing in this state of disintegration wherein each separate little ego is an independent little principality by itself . . . That is what they all want, ultimately — that is at the back of all international peace-for-ever and democratic control talk: they want an outward system of nullity, which they call peace and goodwill, so that in their own souls they can be independent little gods, referred nowhere and to nothing, little mortal Absolutes, secure from question. That is at the back of all Liberalism, Fabianism, and democracy. It stinks. It is the will of the louse. And the Conservative either wants to bully or to be bullied. And the young authoritarian, the young man who turns Roman Catholic in order to put himself under the authority of the Church, in order to enjoy the aesthetic quality of obedience, he is such a swine with cringing hind-quarters, that I am delighted, I dance with joy when I see him rushing down the Gaderene slope of the war.

I feel like knocking my head against the wall: or of running off to some unformed South American place where there is no thought of civilized effort . . .

But it is too bad, it is too mean, that they are all so pettily selfish, these good people who sacrifice themselves . . .

Last night when we were coming home the guns broke out, and there was a noise of bombs. Then we saw the Zeppelin above us, just ahead, amid a gleaming of clouds: high up, like a bright golden finger, quite small, among a fragile incandescence of clouds. And underneath it were splashes of fire as the shells fired from the earth burst. Then there were flashes near the ground — and the shaking noise. It was like Milton — then there was war in heaven. But it was not angels. It was that small golden Zeppelin, like a long oval world, high up. It seemed as if the cosmic order were gone, as if there had come a new order, a new heaven above us: and as if the world in anger were trying to revoke it. Then the small, long-ovate luminary, the new world in the heavens, disappeared again.

I cannot get over it, that the moon is not queen of the sky by night, and the stars the lesser lights. It seems the Zeppelin is in the zenith of the night, golden like the moon, having taken control of the sky; and the bursting shells are the lesser lights.

So it seems our cosmos has burst, burst at last, the stars and moon blown away, the envelope of the

sky burst out, and a new cosmos appeared; with a long-ovate, gleaming central luminary, calm and drifting in a glow of light, like a new moon, with its light bursting in flashes on the earth, to burst away the earth also. So it is the end — our world is gone, and we are like dust in the air.

But there must be a new heaven and a new earth, a clearer, eternal moon above, and a clean world below. So it will be.

Everything is burst away now, there remains only to take on a new being . . .

The Prussian rule would be an external evil. The disintegrating process of the war has become an internal evil, so vast as to be almost unthinkable, so nearly overwhelming us, that we stand on the very brink of oblivion. Better *anything* than the utter disintegration. And it is *England* who is the determining factor for Europe: if England goes, then Europe goes: for we are at this time the vital core of the whole organism. Let the leaves perish, but let the tree stand, living and bare. For the tree, the living organism of the soul of Europe is good, only the external forms and growths are bad. Let all the leaves fall, and many branches. But the quick of the tree must not perish. There are unrevealed buds which can come forward into another epoch of civilization, if only we can shed this dead form and be strong in the spirit of love and creation.

Besides, Germany, Prussia, is not evil through and



through. Her mood is now *evil*. But we reap what we have sowed. It is as with a child: if with a sullen, evil soul one provokes an evil mood in the child, there is destruction. But no child is all evil. And Germany is the child of Europe: and senile Europe, with her conventions and arbitrary rules of conduct and life and very being, has provoked Germany into a purely destructive mood. If a mother does this to a child — and it often happens — is she to go on until the child is killed or broken, so that the mother have her way? Is she not rather, at a certain point, to yield to the paroxysm of the child, which passes away *swiftly* when the opposition is removed? And if Prussia for a time imposes her rule on us, let us bear it, as a mother temporarily bears the ugly tyranny of the child, trusting to the ultimate good. The good will not be long in coming, all over Europe, if we can but trust it within ourselves. *This is not yielding to the child — this is knowing beyond the child's knowledge . . .*

When I drive across this country, with autumn falling and rustling to pieces, I am so sad, for my country, for this great wave of civilization, 2000 years old, which is now collapsing, that it is hard to live. So much beauty and pathos of old things passing away and no new things coming: this house — it is my England — my God, it breaks my soul — their England, these shafted windows, the elm-trees, the blue distance — the past, the great past, crumbling

down, breaking down, not under the force of the coming birds, but under the weight of many exhausted lovely yellow leaves, that drift over the lawn, and over the pond, like the soldiers, passing away, into winter and the darkness of winter — no, I can't bear it. For the winter stretches ahead, where all vision is lost and all memory dies out.

It has been 2000 years, the spring and summer of our era. What, then, will the winter be? No, I can't bear it. I can't let it go. Yet who can stop the autumn from falling to pieces, when November has come in? It is almost better to be dead, than to see this awful process finally strangling us to oblivion, like the leaves off the trees.

I want to go to America, to Florida, as soon as I can: as soon as I have enough money to cross with Frieda. My life is ended here. I must go as a seed that falls into new ground. . .

I hear that the authorities seem to have an insane determination that nobody shall leave the country. . . We are horribly poor. I am rather frightened about the money. But pray Heaven we shall manage — if we land with about \$100 or \$150. . . I feel I must leave this side, this phase of life, for ever. The living part is overwhelmed by the dead part, and there is no altering it. So that life which is still fertile must take its departure, like seeds from a dead plant. I want to transplant my life. I think there is hope of a future, in

America . . . This country must go through some stages of its disease, till I am any good for it, or it is any good for me. It is full of unripe ulcers, that must come out, come to a head, then perhaps they can be lanced and healed. It must work out the impurity which is now deep-seated in its blood. There is no other help for it . . .

I went to a recruiting station yesterday to be attested and to get a military exemption. But I hated it so much, after waiting nearly two hours, that I came away. And yet, waiting there in the queue, I felt the *men* were very decent, and that the slumbering lion was going to wake up in them: not against the Germans either, but against the great lie of this life . . . A strange, patient spirit possessed everybody, as under a doom, a bad fate superimposed. But I felt the patience rested upon slumbering strength, not exhaustion, and the strength would begin before long to stretch itself like a waking lion . . .

The only thing now to be done is either to go down with the ship, sink with the ship, or, as much as one can, *leave* the ship, and like a castaway live a life apart. As for me, I do not belong to the ship; I will not, if I can help it, sink with it. I will not live any more in this time. I know what it is. I reject it. As far as I possibly can, I will stand outside this time. I will

live my life and, if possible, be happy, though the whole world slides in horror down into the bottomless pit. There is a greater truth than the truth of the present, there is a God beyond these gods of today. Let them fight and fall round their idols, my fellow men: it is their affair. As for me, as far as I can, I will save myself, for I believe that the highest virtue is to be happy, living in the greatest truth, not submitting to the falsehood of these personal times . . . What does it matter about that seething scrimmage of mankind in Europe? If that were the only truth, one might indeed despair . . .

Our turn has still to come. It seems to me *our* real frenzy and passion of positive struggle will be at home, England fighting England. This is what it ought to be, in the fight to a finish. But this is what it won't be, if Col. Churchill and Co. have their way. We shall all be wrapped up like dogs to fasten on the body of Germany . . .

They gave me a complete exemption from all military service, thanks be to God. That was a week ago last Thursday. I had to join the Colours in Penzance, be conveyed to Bodmin (60 miles), spend a night in barracks with all the other men, and then be examined. It was experience enough for me, of soldiering. I am sure I should die in a week, if they kept me. It is the an-



nulling of all one stands for, this militarism, the nipping of the very germ of one's being. I was very much upset. The sense of spiritual disaster everywhere was quite terrifying. One was not sure whether one survived or not. Things are very bad.

Yet I liked the men. They all seemed so *decent*. And yet they all seemed as if they had *chosen wrong*. It was the underlying sense of disaster that overwhelmed me. They are all so brave, to suffer, but none of them brave enough to reject suffering. They are all so noble, to accept sorrow and hurt, but they can none of them demand happiness. Their manliness all lies in accepting calmly this death, this loss of their integrity. They must stand by their fellow man: that is the motto.

This is what Christ's weeping over Jerusalem has brought us to, a whole Jerusalem offering itself to the Cross. To me, this is infinitely more terrifying than Pharisees and Publicans and Sinners, taking *their* way to death. This is what the love of our neighbor has brought us to, that, because one man dies, we all die.

This is the most terrible madness. And the worst of it all is that it is a madness of righteousness. These Cornish are most, most unwarlike, soft, peaceable, ancient. No men could suffer more than they, at being conscripted — at any rate, those that were with me. Yet they accepted it all: they accepted it, as one of them said to me, with wonderful purity of spirit — I could howl my eyes out over him — because "they believed first of all in their duty to their fellow man." There

is no falsity about it: they believe in their duty to their fellow man. And what duty is this, which makes us forfeit everything, because Germany invaded Belgium? Is there nothing beyond my fellow man? If not, then there is nothing beyond myself, beyond my own throat, which may be cut, and my own purse, which may be slit: because *I* am the fellow-man of all the world, my neighbour is but myself in a mirror. So we toil in a circle of pure egoism.

This is what "love thy neighbour as thyself" comes to. It needs only a little convulsion, to break the mirror, to turn over the coin, and there I have myself, my own purse, I, I, I, we, we, we — like the newspapers today: "Capture the trade — unite the Empire — *a bas les autres.*"

There needs something else besides the love of the neighbour. If all my neighbours chose to go down the slope to Hell, that is no reason why I should go with them. I know in my own soul a truth, a right, and no amount of neighbours can weight it out of the balance. I know that for me, the war is wrong. I know that if the Germans wanted my little house, I would rather give it them than fight for it: because my little house is not important enough to me. If another man must fight for his house, the more's the pity. But it is his affair. To fight for possessions, goods, is what my soul *will not* do. Therefore it will not fight for the neighbour who fights for his own goods.

All this war, this talk of nationality, to me is false. I *feel* no nationality, not fundamentally. I feel no pas-

sion for my own land, nor my own house, nor my own furniture, nor my own money. Therefore I won't pretend any. Neither will I take part in the scrimmage, to help my neighbour. It is his affair to go in or stay out, as he wishes.

If they had compelled me to go in, I should have died, I am sure. One is too raw, one fights too hard already, for the real integrity of one's being. That last straw of compulsion would have been too much, I think.

Christianity is based on the love of self, the love of property, one degree removed. Why should I care for my neighbour's property, or my neighbour's life, if I do not care for my own? If the truth of my spirit is all that matters to me, in the last issue, then on behalf of my neighbour, all I care for is the truth of *his* spirit. And if his truth is his love of property, I refuse to stand by him, whether he be a poor man robbed of his cottage, or a rich man robbed of his merchandise. I have nothing to do with him, in that wise, and I don't care whether he keep or lose his throat, on behalf of his property. Property, and power — which is the same — is *not* the criterion. The criterion is the truth of my own intrinsic desire, clear of ulterior contamination . . .

You and I, we seem born to differ. I can never see how my duty to my fellow-man should make me kill another man. Which then is my fellow-man? How

shall I distinguish him? And you are right, I do esteem individual liberty above everything. What is a nation for, but to secure the maximum of liberty to every individual? What do you think a nation *is*? — a big business concern? What is the *raison d'être* of a nation — to produce wealth? How horrible! A nation is a number of people united to secure the maximum amount of liberty for each member of that nation, and to fulfil collectively the highest truth known to them. It is by fulfilling the *lowest* truth — that money is honour and glory — that we have come to war and pretty nearly to bankruptcy. If only life were not a horrible wrestling for a limited amount of wealth, we should have none of these disasters. As for equal burdens — if you do not accept the Socialistic “equal distribution of wealth,” how can you accept the conservative retrogressive “equal distribution of burden?” Each is a pure fiction. Let every man move according to his conscience — and the government which compels a man against his conscience is a dastardly cowardly concern . . .

We have had here two Americans. Americans are as a rule rather dreadful, I think. They are *not* younger than we, but older: a second childhood. But being so *old*, in senile decay and second childishness, perhaps they are nearer to the end, and the new beginning.

I *know* now, finally: that I want to go away from England for ever; that I want *ultimately* to go to a country of which I have hope, in which I feel the new unknown.



In short, I want, immediately or at length, to transfer all my life to America. Because there, I know, the *skies* are not so old, the air is newer, the earth is not tired. Don't think I have any illusions about the people, the life. The people and the life are monstrous . . . But I also think that America, being so much *worse*, falser, further gone than England, is nearer to freedom. England has a long and awful 'process of corruption and death to go through. America has dry-rotted to a point where the final *seed* of the new is almost left ready to sprout . . .

I can't feel that Germany wants peace yet, any more than England does. Their fulfillment is still in this ugly contending. But I think both countries are getting tired, emotionally tired. They won't be able to work up the fine frenzy of war much longer. The whole show is too nasty and contemptible, essentially . . .

I will not speak of the war in the abstract any more. I will only say, in the particular, that for *me* the war is utterly wrong, stupid, monstrous and contemptible, and nothing, neither life nor death, makes it any different for *me*. For me, it is better to die than to do something which is utterly a violation to my soul. Death is no violation nor ignominy, and can be thought of with sweetness and satisfaction. On the other hand, war cannot be thought of, for me, without the utmost repul-

sion and desecration of one's being. For me, the war is wrong, and nothing, neither life nor death, can make it right. But — here I submit — I am only myself. At last I submit that I have no right to speak for anybody else, but only for my single self. War is for the rest of men, what it is, of this I can say nothing, I can only speak for myself.

And it comes to this, that the *oneness* of mankind is destroyed in me. I am I, and you are you, and all heaven and hell lie in the chasm between. Believe me, I am infinitely hurt by being thus torn off from the body of mankind, but so it is, and it is right. And believe me that I have wept tears enough, over the dead men and the unhappy women who were once one with me. Now, one can only submit, they are they, you are you, I am I — there is a separation, a separate isolated fate. And never again will I say, generally, "the war"; only "the war to me." For to every man the war is himself, and I cannot dictate what the war is or should be to any other being than myself . . . But for me it is *not* true, and nothing will ever make it so: least of all death, for death is a great reality and seal of truth . . .

Peace and war lie in the heart, in the *desire*, of the people — say what you will. Germany, nations — are external material facts. The reality of peace, the reality of war, lies in the hearts of the people: you, me, all the rest.

We should say "enough of war" while yet we are alive. We should say enough of war, because the desire of something else is strong and most living in us. It is foolish to drop down at last in inertia, and let the war end so — in inertia. While we have the vitality to create, we ought to stop fighting — otherwise, when the end comes, we are spiritually bankrupt. Which is final disaster.

I think that Germany — peace terms — allies — etc. — *do not matter*. What matters is the power in our own hearts, to create. Keep that and all is saved . . .

What an ugly farce Christmas is this year. Will anybody *dare* to sing carols, etc. Pah, it all stinks . . .

I find I am unable to write for England any more — the response has gone quite dead and dumb. A certain hope rises in my heart, quite hot, and I can go on. But it is not for England. It seems to me it is America. If I am kept here I am beaten for ever . . .

I was completely rejected from military service, thank God — for health. I know I should have died. As it is, it is a struggle to go on living. The world is too foul, it poisons us. I don't know what will become of us all. If only a better spirit, a new spirit, would

come into men, and make them begin to make life real and fine, instead of only death. The tension of trying to keep a spirit of life and hope against such masses of foulness wears one right out . . .

I wish there could be a new spring of hope and reality in mankind: I do wish a few people could change, and stand for a fresh and happier world. I suppose it will come, and we shall live through. That is our business, at any rate. We must live through, for the hope of the new summer of the world . . .

I wish one could see where to lay hold, to effect something fresh and clear, just to begin a new state. You say "it is life, life is like that." But that is mere sophistry. Life is what one wants in one's soul . . .

The spring is here, the cuckoo is heard, primroses and daffodils are out in the woods, it is very lovely. I feel that the buds as they unfold, and the primroses come out, are really stronger than all the armies and all the War. I feel as if the young grass growing would upset all the cannon on the face of the earth, and that man with his evil stupidity is after all nothing, the leaves just brush him aside. The principle of life is after all stronger than the principle of death, and I spit on your London and your government and your armies . . .

The state of your desperation is really a thing to be ashamed of. It all comes of submitting and acquiescing in things one *does not vitally believe in*. If you learned

flatly to reject things which are false to you, you wouldn't sell yourself to such deadness. One should stick by one's soul, and by nothing else. In one's soul, one knows the truth from the untruth, and life from death. And if one betrays one's own soul-knowledge one is the worst of traitors. I am out of all patience with the submitting to the things that be, however foul they are, just because they happen to be. But there will fall a big fire on the city before long, as on Sodom and Gomorrah, and will burn us clean of a few politicians, etc., and some of our own flunkying to mere current baseness. I feel angry with you, the way you have betrayed everything that is real, by admitting the superiority of that which is merely temporal and foul and external upon us. If all the aristocrats have sold the vital principle of life to the mere current of foul affairs, what good are the aristocrats? As for the people, they will serve to make a real bust-up, quite purposeless and aimless. But when the bust-up is made and the place more or less destroyed we can have a new start...

London is really very bad: gone mad, in fact. It thinks and breathes and lives air-raids, nothing else. People are not people any more: they are factors, really ghastly, like lemures, evil spirits of the dead. What shall we do, how shall we get out of this Inferno? . . .

D.R. wants this cottage. So we are once more on the streets. As you infer, it doesn't bother me much,



the poverty — perhaps it ought to bother me more, and I should provide better. For the time has come when I shall have to turn beggar, or something. I find we have got exactly Six pounds Nineteen shillings in the world: and not a penny due . . .

You mustn't think I haven't cared about England. I have cared deeply and bitterly. But something is broken. There *is not* any England. One must look now for another world. This is only a tomb . . . There is no news here, we seem as in a lost world. My health is fair. It is the old collapsing misery that kills one . . .

I know that, in the end, we will turn round against this world, and choke it. It is time to be subtle and unified. It is a great and foul beast, this world that has got us, and we are very few. But with subtlety, we can get round the neck of the vast obscenity at last, and strangle it dead. And then we can build a new world, to our own minds: we can initiate a new order of life, after our own hearts. One has first to die in the great body of the world, then to turn round and kill the monstrous existing Whole, and then declare a new order, a new earth.

This is the hope, and the life of one's soul. And do not doubt — in the end, slowly, subtly, by degrees, we will bring it about, and sing the pæn of delivery before we die . . .

Let us all now conquer death and this rushing on death, if we can. Let us set hard against the war, and also against the anarchy, the breaking of all unity which is going on everywhere: this false democracy...

This is the real winter of the spirit in England. We are just preparing to come to fast grips with the war. At last we are going to give ourselves up to it — and everything else we are letting go. I thought we should never come to this — but we are. And the war will go on for a very long time . . . God knows now what the end will be . . .

Only I feel that, even if we are all going to be rushed down to extinction, one must hold up the other, living truth, of Right and pure reality, the reality of the clear, eternal spirit. One must speak for life and growth, amid all this mass of destruction and disintegration.

So I bring out this little paper.\* And will you take it too, and get one or two friends to take it — not for the money's sake, but for the spirit which is struggling in it?

Pray to heaven to keep America always out of this war. God knows what will be the end of Europe . . .

I don't want *The Signature* to be a "success." I want it only to rally together just a few passionate, vital, constructive people. But they must consent first to cast

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\**The Signature*, a journal Lawrence started at this time.

away all that is of no use — all that is wrong. And we have been, we are, colossally wrong, so much so, we daren't face it. *The Signature* will get worse, not better, from the standpoint of comfortlessness with regard to the war, etc. So please, if you think we had better not send it to any of your responsible addresses, let me know . . .

If you really do care about affirmation, in this life of negation, please do get the other people who care, to have *The Signature*.\* It is really *something*: the seed, I hope, of a great change in life: the beginning of a new religious era, from my point. I hope to God the new religious era is starting into being also at other points, and that soon there will be a body of believers, in this howling desert of unbelief . . .

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\*·Editor's Note: And now THE PHŒNIX.



# REFUSAL TO OBEY

by

JEAN GIONO

## Part One: *I CANNOT FORGET*

[*translated from the French by Joseph Pollet and James Peter Cooney*]

I cannot forget the War. I wish I could. Sometimes several days go by without my thinking of it, then suddenly I see it once more, I feel it, I hear it, I suffer it anew. And I am afraid.

This evening is the end of a beautiful July day. The plain below me has become all russet. The wheat is ready to be cut. The air, the sky, the earth, are motionless and calm. Twenty years have passed. And in twenty years, despite the pains and joys of life, I have not cleansed myself of the War. The horror of those four years is always within me. I bear the scar. All the survivors bear the scar.

I was a soldier in the infantry for four years — in regiments of mountaineers. With M.V., who was my captain, we are the only survivors of the first 6th Company. We went through Eparges, Verdun-Vaux, Noyon-

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*Note: Further portions of Giono's book will appear in our following issues. This is its first appearance in English.*

Saint-Quentin, le Chemin des Dames, the attack of Pinon, Chevrillon, Le Kemmel. The 6th Company was replenished hundreds and hundreds of times with men. The 6th Company was a small receptacle of the 27th Division, like a bushel of wheat. When the bushel was empty of men finally, when only a few remained at the bottom like grains stuck in the grooves, it was refilled again with fresh men. Thus was the 6th Company replenished hundreds and hundreds of times. And hundreds of times it was emptied under the mill.

Of all this, we are the last survivors, V. and myself. I should like him to read these lines. He must do as I in the evening: try to forget. He must sit at the edge of his terrace, and he too, he must gaze at the river, green and wide, flowing graciously through the thickets of poplars. But every few days he must re-suffer it, as I do, as all of us do, and as we shall do to the end.

I am not ashamed of myself. In 1913 I refused to join the military preparations which gathered all my comrades. In 1915 I departed for the front without believing in *le patrie*. I was wrong. Not in not believing, but in going.

What I say concerns only myself. For dangerous actions I give no orders, except to myself. So I departed. I never was wounded, except the pupils of my eyes burned by gas. (In 1920 I was given, and later deprived of, a pension of 15 francs every three months on these grounds: "Slight disfiguration.") I never was decorated, except by the English, and for an act which was exactly the opposite of an act of war, so, no martial



action. I know I never killed anybody. I went through all the attacks without a gun, or rather with a gun that that was useless. (All the survivors of the War know how easy it was, with a little earth and piss, to turn a Lebel rifle into a stick.)

I am not ashamed, but to consider well what I had done, it was a cowardly act to have gone to War. I had the air of accepting. I did not have the courage to say: "I will not leave for the attack." I did not have the courage to desert. I have only one excuse: it is that I was young. I am not a coward. I was duped by my immaturity and I was equally duped by those who knew that I was immature. They were very exactly informed, They knew I was twenty: It was inscribed in their registers. They were grown men, experienced and crafty, and knowing perfectly well what must be said to young men of twenty to make them accept a bleeding.

There were professors there, all the professors I had had since my 6th class, officials of the Republic, ministers, the President who signed the posters, in short all those who had any kind of profit in spilling the blood of youths. There were also — I was forgetting them, but they are very important — the writers who exalted heroism, egoism, vainglory, toughness, honor, sport, pride. Writers who weren't all old in body, but young ones also, who had become old by ambition and who misled and betrayed youth just to further their own opportunistic careers. Or who simply betrayed youth because they had souls of traitors and could only betray.

Those are the ones who retarded my humanity. I hold it against them above all because they prevented that humanity from being within me at the precise moment when it would have led me to accomplish useful acts.

Anyway, what is done is done, and what is to be done remains to be done. Time is for everything, even this evening for contemplating this immense plain which spreads from the foot of my terrace to the river. The heat of the full day is heavy on the wheat fields. The heat smells like flour. Twenty years. For twenty years I have watched succeeding themselves these reappings and harvests of the earth, the budding of the trees, the reappings and harvests, the budding of my body. Twenty years, and I have been unable to forget!

There isn't a single moment of my life that I have not thought of opposing War since 1919. I should have fought against it during the time it clutched me, but at that time I was a young man, deranged by the writers of the bourgeois state. My heart, which had been shaped by my father, the cobbler of the simple and pure soul, my heart did not accept the War, and I marched with a clogged gun in the zero-hour of the attack . . .

What disgusts me about the War is its imbecility. I cherish life. Truly, I cherish nothing but life. And yet, even though it is a grave thing to say, I understand that life can be sacrificed to a just and beautiful cause. I have tended victims of contagious and deadly disease without ever fearing for myself. At War I am afraid, I am continually afraid.

Because it's useless. Useless for me. Useless for the comrade beside me on the line of skirmishers. Useless for the comrade opposite. Useless for comrade beside the comrade opposite in the line of skirmishers which is advancing towards me. Useless for the infantryman, for the cavalryman, for the artilleryman, for the aviator, for the soldier, the sergeant, the lieutenant, the captain, the commandant — hold on, I was going to say colonel! Yes, maybe the colonel, but let us stop. Useless for all those who are flung under the grindstone for the human flour. Useful for whom, then?

Since 1919 I have struggled patiently, step by step, with everybody — with my friends, with my enemies, with weak friends of the proletariat, with strong enemies of the workers. And at that time I was not free, I was employed in a bank. That is saying everything. They tried to make me lose my job. Already, at that time, they were saying: "He's a Communist" — in other words one has the right to deprive him of his sustenance and to kill him, him and everyone he supports by his labour: his mother, his wife, his daughter. *I was not a Communist. I am not one now.*

I refused to join the veterans' societies of ex-combatants, because they were at that time formed only for selfish aims, and not to affirm this quality of ex-combatants and never again new combatants.

I was in a lost world. I did not know what action those who thought as I did were taking. So I managed the struggle alone. In my family. It is often there that one must begin, and it is the most difficult. Usually, it is there that one is vanquished.

I have not won, but I remain whole. Among my friends, several followed me and follow me still. And then I began to write, and immediately I wrote for *life*, I wrote *life*, I wanted everyone to get drunk with *life*. I longed to make life seethe like a torrent and to make it rush upon all those dried and hopeless men, to make it hit them with vivifying green waves, to bring the blood to the surface of their beings, to stun them with freshness, with health and joy, to liberate them from the stagnant level of feet in shoes and to carry them off in the torrent. Whoever is carried off in the wild flowings of life can no longer be mired in the slime of War and social injustice.

It was social injustice which led me despairingly along a futile road for four years. When I talked against War I was swiftly convincing. The horrors, all fresh, came back to my lips. I could make them smell the odors of the dead. I could make them see the burst bellies. I filled the room where I spoke with the muddy phantoms — eyes eaten out by the vultures. I evoked putrified friends, mine, and those of the men who listened to me. The wounded moaned against our knees. When I said: "Never again!" they all echoed: "No, no, never again!"

But the next day we again took our places in the bourgeois civil regiment. We began again to create capital for the capitalists. We were the tools of the capitalistic society. And in several days the indignation was spent. To begin with, the labour furnished enough hardship, worry and evil, and immediate bad things

so that the evils of the past were effaced and the dead comrades forgotten. And above all, because the rhythm of labour had been carefully designed to put us to sleep. This rhythm which had passed from our grandfathers into our fathers, and from our fathers into us. This spirit of slavery which transmitted itself from generation to generation, these mothers perpetually pregnant with children conceived after work, had brought into the world only men already carrying the stigma of moral submission.

Society, they said, isn't as badly made as all that. You say that we fought not for our country — as they would have us believe — (and that we know now, and on that treachery we won't again be deceived), but for mines, for phosphates, for oil. I am a miner. — Well, you are a miner? — If the mine closes, what do I eat?

There were small farmers, proprietors of three acres, who thought themselves spotted when I talked about large estate owners. There was even a grocer who defended the oil monopolies because he was selling oil and because he had a stock of five barrels of it in the back of his shop.

Their instinctive attachment to the bourgeois regime prevented them from being logical with themselves. They were afraid of War as I was. Yet they were capable of immense courage. Without recognition and without glory they would tend typhoid and diptheria victims, throw themselves into the water to save children, enter into fire, stop runaway horses, and tramp miles



in the night of the great plains amidst those storms of the end of the world to seek a mad dog.

But they had been terrified of the War the same as myself. They felt very distinctly by that very thing at the bottom of their flesh, by that part of their flesh in which swelled the immemorial history of man, that the fear they had of War came from its inhumanity. But by that part of their flesh which had cleaved to their mothers while they were still in the belly, they had inherited the habit of slavery. This habit had fed them, just as myself, to enter the mine as miners, to be farmers on the farm that their parents had farmed, to establish themselves as grocers on Main Street. But now that it was a question of issuing from the stagnant abyss of the bourgeoisie, their bourgeois heredity prevented them from opening their arms in the ample gesture of the swimmer.

One thing should have shown us light. I say *us* because I also had been blinded by ardour and indecision. *When one enters a struggle against War, one enters a struggle against Government.*

I said to myself: "You will refuse to shake hands with politicians. You will close your door to politicians, even if some day one becomes one of your own family, or if you should find yourself unsuspectingly the friend of a government officer." But I was told "it isn't their fault." And even while thinking they might have chosen another occupation, I was obliged to recognize that it wasn't their fault.

I said to myself: "You will obliterate in your

daughter's history-book of France everything which is an exaltation of War. But it would have been necessary to obliterate everything, and in spite of all I had tried, the teacher came to me and said: "What do you want, Monsieur Giono? What can we do?"

When I saw my friends again, they answered me: "Oil, potatoes, coal, jobs, money, salaries. There always will be War. What do you want — life is like that." They even reached the point of telling me: "It is in the nature of man." (Those who answered in this fashion were the smart ones, the ones who read books.)

And every time that I went out on the roads of the earth I encountered little children with wild hair who played in the grasses, and I knew that all that was only butcher's meat, and there was therefore nothing left but to weep.

*He who is against War is by that single fact outlawed. The Capitalist State considers human life as a veritable raw material of the production of capital. It conserves this material while it is useful to it to conserve it. It maintains it because it is a material and needs to be maintained. And also, to render it more malleable it accepts that it live.*

It has maternity wards where women are delivered with as much care as possible. It has schools where the primary inspectors come to caress the cheeks of children. It has stadiums where 22 men make sport and where a spectacle is given to 40,000. Spectacle already of battle, of combat, of camps. It has barracks.

The child on the edge of the road who plays with grasses can only be cherished in its beauty and in its

human freedom by a few mad-men of my kind. When I think that he has blue eyes and that all his life he will carry the glory of having blue eyes, that he will go, blonde vagabond of the world, in search of hope, of despair, of love — when I think that perhaps he will nourish in his head the rhythms, the forms, and the music which will carry humanity a little farther ahead in the immense prairie of the stars — when I think that indubitably he will only be a man among men, a listener and not the one who blows the bugle, one of the audience and not the one who stands erect in the circle — I say to myself: no matter what he may do, he lives. I admire this life.

The Capitalist State *uses* it. *War is not a catastrophe — it is a means of Government.* The Capitalist State does not recognize the men who seek what we call happiness, the men whose nature is to be what they are, the men of flesh and bone — it only knows them as material for producing capital. To produce capital it has, at certain times, need of War.

The child, the blue eyes, the mother, the father, joy, happiness, love, peace, the shade of trees, the freshness of wind, the flashing course of waters, it does not know.

*It does not recognize in its State, in its laws, the right of enjoying the beauties of the world in liberty. Economically it cannot recognize it. It has laws only for blood and gold.*

In the Capitalist State those who enjoy, enjoy only blood and gold. What it causes to be said by its laws,

its professors, its accredited writers, is that there is *the duty of sacrificing one's self. It is necessary that you, I, and the others, we sacrifice ourselves. To whom?*

The Capitalist State politely hides from us the road to the slaughter-house: you sacrifice yourselves for your country ( already they dare not say that any more ), but after all, *for your neighbour, for your children, for future generations.*

And so forth, from generation to generation.

Who then eats the fruits of this sacrifice in the end?

Hence we know now very clearly what the issue is.

The Capitalist State needs War. It is one of its tools.

*We cannot end War without ending the Capitalist State.*

I speak objectively. Here is an organism which is functioning. It is called Capitalist State as it might be called dog, cat, or caterpillar. It is there, spread on my table, belly open. I see its organism functioning. In this organism, if I take away War, I disorganize it so violently that I render it incapable of life — just as if I took away the heart of the dog, as if I dissected the motor centre of the caterpillar.

It remains to know what I prefer: live myself, permit that my children be children and enjoy the world, or assure by my sacrifice the continuance of the existence of the Capitalist State. Let us continue to be objective. Of what use is my sacrifice? None! (*I hear! do not shout so loudly in the shadows. Do not show your horrid mouths, you victims of the factory. Don't speak, you who say your work-shop is closed and that there is no bread in the house. Do not howl against the gate of the chateau where*

*there is dancing. I hear!)* My sacrifice serves nothing, except to prolong the existence of the Capitalist State.

This Capitalist State, does it merit my sacrifice? Is it kind, patient, amiable, human, honest? Is it seeking happiness for all? Is it carried by its sidereal movement towards goodness and beauty, and does it carry War within itself only as the earth carries its central hearth? I do not ask these questions to answer them myself. *I ask them so that everyone will answer them for himself.*

I prefer to live. I prefer to live and to bring an end to War and the Capitalist State. I prefer occupying myself with my own happiness. I don't want to sacrifice myself. I need the sacrifice of nobody! I refuse to sacrifice myself for anyone! I want to sacrifice myself only to my happiness and to the happiness of others. I refuse the advise of the rulers of the Capitalist State, of the professors of the Capitalist State, the writers and the philosophers of the Capitalist State. Do not trouble yourselves. I know what it's all about. My father and my mother made me arms, legs, and a head. It was to use them for myself. *And this time I will use them for myself.*

No more can one wander about the battlefields with one's gun like a stick. Disdain, acceptance of martyrdom, non-resistance — all of that cannot now be efficacious. Do you believe that the Capitalist State will tear its heart out *willingly*? War is the heart of the Capitalist State. War irrigates with fresh blood the industries of the Capitalist State. War makes rise to the cheeks of the Capitalist State the beautiful colour and peach bloom. You would believe that the Capitalist State is



going to tear its heart out because you are touching, imbecile, walking in the line of skirmishers with your gun like a stick?

*There is only one single remedy: our strength. There is only one single way of using it: revolt.*

*Since our voices have not been heard.*

*Since our moans have not been heeded.*

*Since they have turned away when we have shown the wounds of our hands, our feet, our foreheads.*

*Since, without pity, they bring again the crown of thorns. and already see there prepared the nails and the hammer.*

The earth peaceably makes bread. The mist of the summer has issued from the wheat-fields and fills all the horizons. In that slow movement in which it spreads over all the countryside it uncovers the palpitations of little brilliant dust-clouds: they are the light seeds of grains prematurely ripened which have taken flight. The heavy summer evening brings its shadows.

*I recognize you, Devedeux, who were killed beside me in front of the battery of the hospital in attacking the fort of Vaux. Do not disturb yourself. I see you. Your forehead is down there on that hill, resting on the foliage of the holm-oaks, your mouth is in that little valley. Your eye, which moves no more, fills itself with dust in the sands of the torrent. Your burst body, your hands entwined in your entrails, is somewhere down there in the shadow as though under the great-coat which we threw over you because you were too terrible to see and because we were forced to stay near you with the enemy machine-gun sweeping the shell-hole on the surface of the ridge.*

*I recognize you, Marroi, who were killed beside me in front of the battery of the hospital in attacking the fort of Vaux. I see you as though you were still living, but your blonde moustache is now that wheat-field that is called the field of Philippe.*

*I recognize you, Jolivet, who were killed beside me in front of the battery of the hospital in attacking the fort of Vaux. I cannot see you because your face was sheared at a single blow and I had bits of your flesh on my hands, but I hear, from your inhuman mouth, that wailing which swells, and then is still.*

*I recognize you, Veerkamp, who were killed beside me in front of the battery of the hospital in attacking the fort of Vaux. You fell from a single blow in the belly. I was lying directly behind you. The smoke hid you. I saw your back like a mountain.*

I recognize you all, and I see you again and I hear you. You are there in mist which advances. You are in my earth. You have taken possession of the vast world. You surround me. You speak to me. You are the world, and you are myself.

I cannot forget that you were living men and that you are dead, that you were killed in the supreme moment when you were seeking your happiness, and that you were killed for nothing, that you were trapped by force and by deceit in actions where your interest did not lie.

You, whose friendship I knew, your laughter and joy, I cannot forget that the directors of the War considered you only as material. You, whose blood I saw,

whose decay I saw, you who have become the earth, you who have become bank-bills in the pockets of Capitalists, I cannot forget the period of your transformation where you were mashed up to change your serene flesh into gold and blood of which the regime had need.

And you have won. Because your faces are in all the mists, your voices in all the seasons, your moans in all the nights, your bodies swell the earth as the bodies of the monsters swell the sea. I cannot forget. I cannot forgive. Your terrible presence forbids pity. Even for our friends, if they forget.





# CREATIVENESS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

★ *AN ESSAY IN REVOLUTIONARY PACIFISM*

by

DEREK SAVAGE

## *Chapter Six: THE IMPLICATIONS OF PACIFISM*

Simple and absolute refusal to participate in war and preparations for war: that may seem negative: and that indeed is a frequent accusation. Yet really, of course, it is far from that, for refusal to take part in war is the choice of sanity and a lifeward polarity as opposed to the deathward polarity of destruction. If it is asserted that a soldier who is conscripted into war service is behaving in a positive manner, while a pacifist who refuses, on moral and political grounds, to fight, is being 'negative' there is here a confusion between positivity and mere activity, which are by no means the same thing. The pacifist, in standing by certain moral principles (the sacredness of human life, inviolability of conscience, the wrongness of coercion) is adopting, in fact, a creative attitude towards this fundamental personal, social and political issue.

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★ *Note: This chapter and the one immediately following are from the as yet unpublished book which grew out of the essay in Vol. 2 No. 1*

I have stated that the frustration of creativeness in a purposeless society must be overcome by a direction of creativeness in the realm of action, expressed in a common purpose towards the re-integration of society upon the principle of human centrality. Here, then, is an opportunity, *the* opportunity, for that creative participation, in the opposition to war.

As a pacifist, then, I renounce the false purposiveness of war. I am united with my fellow pacifists in a common purpose of opposition to war. Yet, is opposition to war, in itself, a true purpose? Manifestly it is not. The pacifist movement is composed of individuals standing out from a society whose structure has made war unavoidable, short of a modification of that structure, and which is now engaged in the prosecution of warfare. Yet this common renunciation, by itself, is not sufficient. This is a negative, neutral purpose, which only becomes positive when its implications are realised and acted upon.

In a democratic-capitalist state, theoretically a politically enfranchised society governs itself through its elected representatives. What we now have, however, could more aptly be described as "demagoguery," in which material and moral pressure is brought to bear upon the masses in order to influence their choice of rulers, by their real masters. With regard to his voting power, and that is meagre enough, there is apathy in the mind of the ordinary citizen. He does not feel himself personally implicated in his government.

Not so on the vital issue of war. Here, batteries of

propaganda are brought to bear upon the masses, to persuade them to allow their rulers to prepare for war and, later, to consummate their preparations. But war, modern totalitarian warfare, is a matter which involves a moral crisis for every person not hypnotised by propaganda and mass-thinking. It is *his* services that are required in war's prosecution, *his* hands that are required to jab the bayonet or release the bomb, *his* person or livelihood that will suffer through the destructiveness of warfare, and *his* wife or children who will be the victims of it. He is therefore faced with this immediate personal crisis, which has far-reaching implications in personal and social life.

The pacifist position is the most powerful positive answer to the action-reaction of fascist, communist and other factions, all of which represent *interests* ingrained in modern materialist society, but the struggle towards a new social synthesis must operate on the moral plane as well as on that of politics and economics. It must be above factions, and have a moral direction and impetus. Communists are content to disregard morality in political action, and this disregard is liable to degenerate into an actual denial of morality and refusal to face up to moral issues, such as that of war, treating them as variations in the political realm merely. But participation in war is primarily a moral question, and only secondarily a political one. The pacifist sees the moral issue in the challenge of war: for him it is primarily a moral issue, and then, by implication, a political one. Thus his politics are exalted and given meaning and



purpose by an obedience to the superior sphere of morality, are given a human centrality; for at the centre of his politics is the figure of Man.

There is an argument sometimes used to discredit the pacifist position, which runs as follows: "As a citizen you cannot dissociate yourself from the community of which you are a member, and whose amenities and privileges you enjoy, at the point where it becomes unpleasant for you personally; that is, at the point of war. If you are content to accept the benefits of living in a community you must also take a share in defending it from external attack, however distasteful this may be to you."

Now, of course, there is no simple and direct answer to this argument, which is true within its limitations. For indeed, *if* you accept the benefits of a community, and if you have no great desire for that community to give place to one based on some radical modification of its previous structure, then you are logically so committed. Yet this argument fails to take account of the fact that for a majority of people the 'privileges' of life in a capitalist society are more than counter-balanced by its injustices and disadvantages, not to mention the fact that most such 'privileges' for the ordinary man are paid for in hard cash. The argument has rather a *bourgeois* flavour. And that, no doubt, is where many good men, whom one might expect to take a pacifist stand, fail at the last moment to carry their convictions through. For they are too deeply involved in present-day society and its privileges to be able to step

off the solid ground they provide into the chaotic waters of pacifism.

Mere pacifism, mere resistance to war, is not enough, it is true. But is there such a thing as mere pacifism? No honest and intelligent man, who, faced with the challenge of modern war, has chosen non-participation can have failed to become aware of the considerable implications of that decision. For once that step has been taken we are indeed in 'chaotic waters' and have to modify ourselves to a new outlook on the world. And in terms of politics we are, if we are honest, committed to a struggle for a new social order, one in which wars will be unnecessary if not impossible. That must be the pacifist's reply to the argument I have reproduced above.

It will be seen at once, granted my premises, that pacifism is a revolutionary matter. The pacifist is one who, faced with the most fundamental challenge presented by modern society, has chosen the creative, life-ward response, which at once commits him to a higher loyalty than to the old order which demands his participation in war. If he can show no higher loyalty, then his case is but sentimental and illogical. War is a product of our present society, and if it is to be eliminated our society must undergo a profound modification and all its resources, moral and material, which at present are channelled to the service of destruction must be lifted up to creative and positive ends. By our present failure to achieve this we have confessed our moral culpability, for at root the failure is one of morals and imagination, is a spiritual failure, operating, on the

practical level, as a material failure to satisfy the real economic needs of the community and to introduce economic justice and equality into the world.

By his decision of non-violence in the matter of war, the pacifist steps out of the radius of modern society, and in so doing he creates a new focus. There is thus set up a painful struggle between the pacifist and his environment, between the old form of society and the new centrality which the pacifist represents. The issue of war is, we have seen, for the pacifist primarily a moral one, and then, secondarily, one of politics. Therefore, by making a moral decision and stepping out of the radius of war-polarized society he raises politics to a higher level, the level of morality, of verticle-principle. His politics become morally determined and directed.

What is likely to be the effect upon society of the emergence of this principle, embodied by this group of persons, in its midst? Clearly, the creative response of non-participation in warfare will be restricted to a minority of people. Non-participation coupled with an acceptance personally and politically of all that it implies will be restricted to an even smaller number of persons. It must be their responsibility to make their less imaginative comrades conscious of all the implications of their position, which they themselves have already accepted.

In the emergence of this minority, which has rejected the old society and which is committed to the establishment of a New Order, lies the hope of leader-

ship and direction for drifting humanity. Who can tell what will be the effect upon even the masses who are content to obey, of this body of persons testifying to their belief in the value and dignity of the individual, in the inviolability of conscience, in the sovereignty of man? The effect may well be incalculable. For although the masses may be content to obey, at first and for a time, and although the unifying sense of common purpose will provide them with a temporary release of emotional energy, it can never be accurately predicted when there will be a revulsion against the insensate carnage and wastage of modern warfare, when a breaking point will be reached at which they will turn upon the leaders who brought them, as they supposed, into war, and rend them. And war itself, gradually divested of its pageantry and glory, becoming grimmer and more devilish, will cease to stir its participants to enthusiasm. There is still, in the democracies at least, where individual liberty still has a margin for foothold, a reluctance on the part of men to go out and be killed.

However that may be, it is certain that the presence of a distinct group and body of people in the community who have responded to the challenge presented by the issue of war by pledging themselves to opposition and the bringing about of a New Order will present not only in itself a constant challenge to the conscience of the community, but also a monumental affirmation of the human principle upon which that New Order must be founded.

*Chapter Eight: THE POLITICS OF PACIFISM*

Can pacifism be translated into politics? The answer is both Yes, and No. It cannot be translated into the politics of the old order, the politics of power, of factions and interests. We cannot conceive of a pacifist government in the international madhouse of today. In that sense, pacifism is not politics, and never can be. However sincere our statesmen may have been in their desire for peace, they have been at the head of a nation which is organised in a world-system whose working is inconsistent with peace, and therefore at the pinch they have been forced to make war. Pacifism must be unofficial, an underground movement of those who are dissociated from the operations of the present system, whose loyalties are elsewhere.

Yet in another sense, it is imperative that pacifism be translated into politics, and that is the sense in which it involves the creation of a new order of society, brought around to an entirely new centrality.

Obviously, we cannot think of a pacifist party coming into office and legislating according to pacifist principles. We must think of the question in terms of the dissemination of the moral principles which pacifism implies; chief of which, of course, is the principle of the centrality of the person.

“The individual, therefore, is a repository or seat of sovereignty in a sense in which no State, league, union or confederation can ever be. A man has a brain, which no group of men as a

group can have. Therefore, the group, the city, the nation, the whole civilized race of man, is the servant of the sovrain within the individual; and the individual is not the servant of any supposed sovranty residing in anything anywhere outside of himself. The individual at his best is possessed by sovranty. And only by reason of the integrity of its component individuals can any body or mass of men be an expression or instrument of sovranty." (Alfred Hy. Haffenden: *Politics Old and New.*)

The pacifist purpose, then, must be the establishment of an order which acknowledges this sovranty and accordingly provides conditions for the liberation of the creativeness of all the individuals who compose that Order. It follows that it is no mere matter of legislation or mechanism. Such an Order must be recreated, like Christianity, with each new generation of men. Nevertheless, it will be seen how the application of this principle to the present capitalist order of society would render certain legislation imperative. The society which depends upon the exploitation of the masses of men by a privileged and irresponsible minority must go. An economic democracy must be introduced to correspond with political democracy — in other words, democracy itself must become real and not a pretence.

What is the function of a truly organic society, created from the real needs of men, and founded upon co-operation rather than coercion? It is to enable men, all men in their various ways and according to their vary-



ing capacities, to realise themselves in their personal fullness and completeness in all their aspects and relationships, personal, sexual, social and cosmic. The figure of Man at the centre of our morality and of our politics must be Man in his relationship to the Cosmos, responsible, finally, to God, and not man as a specialized functional machine. Society must set man free, and not provide chains and shackles with which to bind him. Purpose, ultimately, is of the individual and not of the mass.

If we believe in the all-round, integral, independent Man, so also must we believe in and strive for the all-round, unspecialised community created around that man, and ordered from his immediate living. Men chiefly realise themselves in relation to their work. Since this is so it seems to me that mass-production industrialism on a large scale, with its concomitant centralisation, and specialisation of occupation and locality will have to go. It is evident that industrialism's effect to date has been degrading and grievous to man rather than elevating and beneficial. Spiritually it has helped to impoverish and dehumanise men rather than to contribute to their enrichment. Are we to assume that 'under new management' industrialism will turn out to be a good angel after all? In a sense, perhaps, yes — in a severely modified form. Possibly we can still persuade certain members of the community to spend their working lives underground in coal mines and to endanger health and body in connection with certain industrial processes of an 'essential' nature. Yet

once the capitalist coercion is removed (as it must be if we are to enter into a truly human order), there may well be a retreat from industrial modes on the part of the workers. On the other hand, before then totalitarian warfare may have irremediably smashed up the intricately centralised system upon which society at present depends, and left us with no alternative.

An argument frequently advanced in solution of the problem of man's relation to mechanized modes of work, touched upon in Chapter Two, is that in a properly planned society a man would have to spend but a small fraction of his time on such labour, while he could employ to advantage his long leisure on some art or handicraft, or in the pursuit of culture, which would provide him with the personal satisfaction denied him by his occupation.

In this argument the central problem of man's relationship to his work still remains unsolved, and a merely quantitative amendment suggested. However short his hours, there is still the fundamental question of relationship to be solved. And even allowing the assumption of a planned society, we have no justification for assuming that the vast numbers of men will choose to spend their leisure in self-improving pursuits. It is a matter of observation that, generally speaking, in such matters men take the line of least resistance. They do not consciously desire their full faculties to be called into operation, although if their work, their livelihood demands it, they will respond to the demand. But it must be a real demand; it is unlikely, even if it were

to be desired, that they would artificially stimulate this response in leisure.

Spare time activities, artificially fostered, have a spurious look. They remind one of those physical-culture gadgets utilised to produce muscle and sinew on a frame whose normal living does not call for their employment. They are disparate, do not terminate in a common centre or connect with the roots of existence, and remain instead as fragmentary portions of a dislocated life. Work must be restored to its place in life as ritual — a mystery, the mystery of man's physical being, and through it men must strive to attain wholeness.

Decentralisation in industry must be accompanied by decentralisation in the realm of politics; power, from being centralised in the hands of a ruthless and oppressive minority, must be spread over as wide an area as possible, and brought back, eventually, to every individual member of society. Only thus can its abuse be checked. The law of the conservation of energy would seem to apply forcibly in this instance: the greater the concentration of power at the centre, the more it is diluted at the periphery, and the wider the scope for tyranny and oppression. We know well how a central authority invariably tyrannises over its subordinate parts; how, to take a comparatively moderate example, Wales and Ireland, to say nothing of further-flung portions of the British Empire, ruled from Whitehall, have been used ruthlessly for the benefit of the money-power that pulls the strings behind the central official authority.

Decentralisation involves de-specialisation; I think

that is clear. De-specialisation is necessary for the development of the full faculties of men, and to enable them, consequently, to assume responsibility for their immediate locality, to free themselves from the crushing and vacuous pressure of central authority.

The operation of this principle of human centrality would have far-reaching effects. Eventually, no doubt, it would result in society being brought to a much more 'primitive' level, a level of agriculture and handicrafts and small, comparatively independent, self-governing communities, distinctive localities, regional and national cultures.

If we do not voluntarily accept the necessity of, and the responsibility for, this change, it will eventually be done for us by the painful and wasteful operations of modern warfare.

Pacifism demands a new conception of politics, and pacifist politics cannot be the politics of power. It is the business of pacifists to create the spiritual conditions in which legislative change is possible rather than to plunge directly into the political arena as it is at present constituted, as gladiators for peace.

Politics as we know it is debased by its subservience to Power. Politics have degenerated into a struggle for power, and power has its own logic and structure which permeates and dominates all that is brought into contact with it. And this explains the fundamental similarity of communist and fascist politics at the present day. Although professing such different ideas and ideals, they are united in their notions of how to put them in-

to operation. The ideals, however, suffer a corruption at their contact with the means used for their advancement, and once more the old evil of Power invades, pervades and determines the new form of society which was to be free from the evils that inhered in the old order. The pacifist political aim cannot be partisan — to maintain a particular faction in power. Power, in fact, is an extremely dangerous thing in the hands of limited human agents, and the only solution would seem to be to distribute it over a wide area in actual fact, both politically and economically, and thus to provide an infinite series of checks to its abuse. Power of the individual over his fellows must be very strictly limited. If we remove the coercive influence of physical, material and economic power, which in the past have in their manifestations determined structure and working of societies, it may well be that the spiritual power inherent in man and expressed in an organic form will take possession and mould society after its own divine, hierarchic order, which is utterly without compulsion.

Our age places far too high a value upon material things and far too low a valuation upon things of the spirit. But now, to a considerable extent, man has established his mastery in the phenomenal world. The famines, pestilences, and hard and bitter subservience in the material sphere, which have been man's lot throughout all his previous history can be overcome. War is man-made and can, given the spiritual effort, be eradicated from society.

We must not, however, deceive ourselves with the

vulgar notion that we are now upon the threshold of a new era of materialistic development and vastly increased riches and resources. It may well be that in the New Order man will choose to adopt a conservative attitude towards his environment rather than one of lust and greed. The conception of a new Age of Plenty based upon unlimited exploitation of the machine directed upon natural resources is already in course of being exploded in the popular mind, as it is being found that the world of Nature has its own slow laws of growth and decay which it is sheer folly to abuse.

On the one hand we may be upon the threshold of a new era in the spiritual life of man; on the other, we may retrogress into another Dark Age, infinitely more abysmal and deathly than the last. The whole question is focussed and made manifest to us in the disruption of War, and upon our response to its challenge to our spiritual existence depends the fate of man's creativeness for, perhaps, many years to come.







## A MODERN PROPOSAL

*Offered with all due respect to the rulers of Christendom*

by

JAMES THOMSON

Many of the readers of this paper must have read of the amazing new "freezing method" which our Scientists have discovered for treating diseases: especially for treating the terrible and ever-spreading disease of cancer. This new method consists of artificially imitating one of the secrets of Nature: the strange Winter hibernation of various beasts and reptiles.

The patient is placed naked into a specially prepared compartment, which is then sealed, and he sinks into an inanimate state as the compartment's temperature is gradually lowered far below the zero of conscious life. In this artificial coma, in which the patient's life dwindles like the flame of an oil-lamp turned so low that it cannot be seen, breathing and the heart-beat become inaudible and undetectible. The activity of all the organs of the body subsides into the immobility of suspended life. And like the animals in their hibernating caves, the patient needs no nourishment. But all

the foreign, alien, disease-causing elements which are not an intrinsic, vital part of the patient's being do need nourishment. And receiving none, they perish. Thus is the patient's body purified and healed.

Here, then, is my proposal: by transferring this new technique of Science from the realm of individual therapy to the domain of society and mass-therapy, we can eliminate all the foreign, alien, disease-causing elements which are assailing the body of Capitalist-Christendom.

Without wasting any time, the rulers of all the States of modern Christendom must immediately commence building immense refrigerated repositories — underground — like the catacombs, and there dispose of all the poor and the unemployed.

Almost over-night, the ugly and spreading bacteria of unemployment, with its hidden menace of cancerous revolutions, and with its health-draining and profit-draining burden of high taxes, relief agencies, bread lines, labour troubles and strikes, could be eliminated!

Our streets could be cleansed of the multitudes of the unsightly poor and unemployed and worn-out, useless workers, whose ill-clad and ill-fed presences are like running sores blemishing the dignity and wealth and well-being of our national Democracies. And with this wholesale clearing away of all the old and useless workers, and the poor and the unemployed, we would be free to purge our modern industrial cities of the leprous-like tenement slum sections, where the workers live like vermin. For we should bear in mind that these vile

slums are a constant menace to our own health.

These national, Democratic repositories should — as I have already suggested — be built underground, somewhat on the same pattern as the catacombs were, or as morgues are today. For in this way they will cost us less of our money to keep at the proper freezing temperature, as they will be hidden and protected from the Sun's dangerous warmth. Besides, being out of sight in this manner, they will not provoke amongst those members of our own class who persist in occasional lapses into such foolish sentimentality, any faint twinges of that atavistic psychological impediment known as conscience. Furthermore, they will be less apt to awaken grief or apprehension or rebellion amongst the workers we have retained and who have thus been separated from their loved ones.

I realize, of course, that these national repositories will entail quite an enormous expenditure of our money. But this initial expense will be the major one, for the operating costs will be trivial. And we can be comforted by the knowledge that even this initial expense will be nothing compared to the frightful and steadily deepening draining of our profits made by the cancerous inroads of charity, taxes, relief agencies, relief employment — all of which are hopeless attempts at best to cope with the spreading pestilences of unemployment, poverty, strikes, and revolutions.

It can be expected, of course, that the multitudes will at first shrink from this new procedure. But the rulers of Christendom must remain firm and use force

wherever necessary. For there will undoubtedly arise defiant, rebellious leaders of the workers. These must be immediately executed as traitors to our national well-being. However, the multitudes are of nature quite gentle and docile, and with the proper sort of handling they are always malleable. We must be liberal-minded and be ready to take into account their unreasoning attitude in this new measure. The newness and the strangeness of it will at first startle and alarm them.

But for the most part they will never even dream of defying us. Look how easily we lead them to slaughter in our internecine financial wars. They have become so used to these periodical massacres that they scarcely murmur against them. Indeed, quite the contrary: the workers in England, France, Germany, Russia, Finland, China, Japan, are all enthusiastic pawns in our time-honoured chess-board of Money Wars. And all of them accept unquestioningly our variety of conflicting and amusing deceptions. So it is unthinkable that the multitudes shall resist, except in sporadic instances, this new measure of ours.

Nevertheless, as a beginning step it would be well to enlist the always ready services of the clergy and the labour leaders. These, especially the former, could disseminate among the multitudes the happy analogy that their descent into the cold storage repositories would be a holy re-enactment of the fate of Him whom they pathetically call their Saviour; and that like Christ, they would be resurrected when society had need of them.

Indeed, this analogy must be strongly stressed. The

unemployed, along with the discarded, useless workers, and the crippled, sickly workers, must be taught that they should be glad to sacrifice themselves for the good of society — and that their sacrifice will be by no means as hard to bear as that of their Saviour's. For it will merely mean that they must descend into cold storage for a period of time — a year, two years, or perhaps even a decade, depending upon the needs of Capitalist society.

And now, at this point, I wish to enter into what may appear to be a digression, but which is really an important aspect of this proposal. We all know that the rulers of the Totalitarian States have ruthlessly striven, in varying degrees, to completely obliterate the memory of Jesus from amongst their subjects, and to replace His image with their own. And already there are several generations of the proletariat in these Totalitarian States who have been carefully brought up in either utter ignorance, or else blind hatred, of Jesus Christ.

Communiques reaching us this Christmas from bloody Finland record the naive, astonished delight of captured young Totalitarian soldiers as they watched the Finnish soldiers decorate their Christmas trees. These young Totalitarian soldiers had never before seen a Christmas tree. Nor, of course, had their wives or children.

The communiques also speak of some of the older Totalitarian soldiers among the captives who, upon seeing the Christmas tree, and beneath it the little rep-

licas of the Nativity of Jesus in the stable in Bethlehem, began weeping bitterly, for it awoke in them deeply slumbering memories of their childhood.

Now there is an important truth to be learned from this, a truth which we can turn to our own advantage, and so not make the same blundering mistake as the rulers of the Totalitarian States. For apparently, despite the unrelenting efforts of the rulers of these Regimes, their subjects still delight in worshipping the memory of Jesus — even in the midst of carrying out our modern Herodian massacres.

We must conclude from this that the rulers of the Capitalist States have shown commendable wisdom in allowing their subjects to continue the harmless memorial ceremonies of Christmas and Easter. For these ceremonies seem to delight and appease some inexplicable desire that persists in living in the hearts of these simple creatures.

And yet, although it is undeniably a shrewd policy to permit these innocent ceremonies, it would be still more cunning — especially at this perilous time — to utterly destroy all the records of the morally revolutionary preachings of Jesus. For although the words of Jesus have been — and can continue to be — cleverly distorted and *interpreted* by our priests and ministers, nevertheless they remain highly dangerous sources of moral rebellion, particularly where Jesus scathingly denounces private property, usury, profit-making, exploitation, privileged classes, warfare, murder, and violence and coercion of all sorts.



*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

*Blessed are the gentle: for they shall inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.*

*Take no thought of your life, what ye shall eat, or where ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body than rainment? Behold the birds of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

*Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these.*

*Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying: what shall we eat? or where shall we drink? or wherewith shall we be clothed? for your heavenly Father knoweth*

*that ye have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.*

*What man is there among you, whom if his son ask bread, will give him a stone? If, then, you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?*

*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and gentle as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and scourge you in their churches. And ye shall be brought up before governors and kings for my sake. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

*What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul.*

*All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*

The day could quite possibly arrive when some of the simple minded subjects of Capitalist Christendom might come upon passages such as these of the words

of Jesus directly, without having a priest or minister to explain them, and they might foolishly take these passionate exhortations in their literal meaning, and in irresponsible excitement spread them among their comrades.

Should this ever happen, it is hardly likely that our Capitalist system could withstand the repercussions. *For although we are thoroughly prepared and practically invincible against any revolutions of force and violence, yet we are peculiarly impotent against the threat of any unarmed, moral uprising.*

Therefore, as will be readily seen by every wise ruler, the time has come when the New Testament and all other sacred books containing the words of Jesus should be destroyed. Or else — and this perhaps would be a more crafty move — they should be scrupulously censored, leaving only those harmless portions which relate the curiously touching accounts of the nativity of Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem; the miracles he performed; his trial, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. These are sufficient to appease the child-like, unconscious desires of the multitude.

And in connection with this measure, we might do well — as soon as we have put it into effect — to follow the stern example of the Totalitarian rulers. Just as they impose the death penalty upon any of their subjects caught listening to enemy radio propaganda, so too should we inflict the death-sentence on any of our subjects found guilty of reading the forbidden portions of the New Testament.

This will eliminate a great deal of unnecessary trouble for us. We can already see the mistake of our fellow-rulers in England — how they have weakly allowed themselves to be impeded in the prosecution of their present War by permitting their subjects to have unrestricted access to the teachings of Christ.

As a direct result, they now have on their hands an alarming number of conscientious objectors who refuse to serve in the military service of our Capitalistic system. And these Christian conscientious objectors are not only dangerous, they are also an unnecessary expense. We can't quite dare to execute them — although the rulers of France have taken a much firmer and more admirable stand than England in this matter — for we have stupidly pretended that we ourselves accepted the teachings of Christ. And so all we can do, in our present false position, is throw them into prison where they are of no use to us and must be fed and clothed and housed at our expense.

All this could be swiftly eliminated by confiscating all the existent copies of the New Testament — issuing censored, expurgated copies to replace them, and by proclaiming the death penalty for anyone found with an unsundered copy of the condemned versions.

To return, then, to the major measure of this proposal. Not only must we impress upon the multitudes the felicitously appropriate analogy between Christ's burial and resurrection and their own descent into national cold storage repositories, with eventual return to life and society, but also we must show them that

this very measure will at the same time restore them to perfect health and vigour. ( This will be a double boon, for they will be able to work harder and bear up under longer hours for us when they are brought forth. ) Indeed, it is not now difficult to envision a truly Golden Age in the near future — an Age when the multitudes of workers will all be carefully sifted, catalogued, and judiciously distributed in centralized repositories for the maximum benefit of our Capitalist society; an Age when the workers can be taken from national repositories and worked to the point of absolute collapse, then rushed back into cold storage to be restored to maximum efficiency again; an Age — if I be permitted to make the pun — which the workers might very appropriately name the *Hammer and Icicle* era.

There will be numerous details to be worked out, this I realize. But these we can solve as we go along. The important step is to immediately start building our national repositories. Then, such problems as what to do with the wives and children of unemployed or sickly or worn-out workers who are to be sent down into cold storage; or with old, useless worker-parents being supported by their children; etc. etc. can be decided upon.

Before closing, I should like to make this further suggestion: we should confiscate a number of the infants of working-class mothers and store them in our repositories. I feel this should be done for two excellent reasons; first this would automatically provide our own children with an adequate supply of wet nurses, for it

is becoming increasingly evident that the women of our own class are loathe to suckle our own offspring; and secondly, it would assure us of an ever ready supply of infants for the future wives of our own class, for it seems that we ourselves are growing strangely sterile, and must be prepared to face the day when we will have to depend on the national worker's repositories to supply us with a grafted stock.

One last suggestion: in order to smooth the difficulties and reluctance which may arise among the workers in the commencement of putting this measure into effect, we should announce that Christmas and Easter shall be national holidays, and that all those who have been put down into cold storage will be resurrected on those days and permitted to visit their relatives and friends. This will give the workers all something to look forward to and to be properly grateful to us for.

Finally, in closing, let me reassure those few amongst ourselves who may hesitate in taking this step — which is imperatively necessary for the survival of our Capitalist system — by submitting the incontrovertible truth that this proposal is, in the last analysis, far more merciful and humane than a continuation of the present state of affairs in modern society. Let them be comforted by this.





## NO EYE CAN MEASURE \*

by

FRANK KENDON

Author's Foreword: This poem was written in the first six weeks of war, and inevitably carries the marks of trouble. It is hardly necessary to say that it will therefore be a trouble to those who read it. It would be besides the point to make excuses for it; but it is legitimate, perhaps, because of the trouble, to ask as much patience with it as will take the reader through to the end before he finally passes judgement in his mind upon its content. If it begins in storm it ends in quiet. Whether it wins that quiet by right or by self-illusion is what the author must leave to the reader. The occasion is a war that threatens to cause widespread suffering, one that is without doubt an intense focus of human destiny, and therefore of immense import to every person, and it is for this reason and no other that anyone is asked to read it, and to read it through. Perhaps the attempt was too much for the equipment of the author, the event being so huge and complex. Yet here it is; there is no time to amend it simply as poetry; and if it is wrong the author knows that it is nevertheless true, if not as a philosophy, at least as a record of one who felt the need of a philosophy.

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\**Editor's Note: This poem (which was forwarded to us by Derek Savage and which fortunately passed unnoticed by the censors and their black-outs) is circulating privately & spontaneously — via hand-transcribed copies — amongst those thousands of English men and women, deliberately ignored by the "free" American press, who are opposed to War. Its actual circulation is unknown and inestimable. This is its first printed publication.*

## I

I was sorry for Men, you see, Men losing their Freedom;  
I was angry at that; I supported War. My Tears  
Put this Sword in your hands.

"This bomb?" you said,  
"Must I drop this? On them?"

On them, I said.

"You must be bloody sorry for them," you said.  
"What about me?"

I am sorry for all the world, I said;  
Can't you see that without more argument?  
Do you think I do this lightly, without thinking?

"Do exactly what?" you interrupted —

Do you think I do this lightly, without thinking?  
Declaring War, I mean?

"You've thought it out?" you said, incredulous,  
"You mean, you've thought it out?"

I do, I said.  
The time has come at last, We Must Stand Firm.  
I have Pledged that when they bomb, We will Retaliate.  
They must be resisted, I said. There is No other Way  
Of Saving Freedom. We must Pay the Price.

"Whose freedom do you mean?" you said.  
"Whose freedom do you mean to save with This?  
Ours, when we wipe a thousand of them out?  
Theirs, when they rush their kids into the cellars?"

No, I said sadly, that is the Price we Pay.

"I see," you said. "And you intend to buy it.  
You'll get it, won't you, for the price you pay?"

I most sincerely hope so, I replied.  
At least you won't say that I broke Our Pledge.

"I shan't say much," you said.  
"I see, now, what you meant.  
I see now what you meant:  
Freedom is not a thing to talk about  
In detail, but a Cause, a Sacred Charge,  
So sacred, that Things done in Freedom's name  
However unspeakable, corrupt, and brutish  
They may be in themselves are by that Name  
Rechristened Noble Sacrifice."

I do not *like* to Unsheathe this Dreadful Sword,  
I hoped we shouldn't have to call you up,  
But We've Got to Be Prepared.

"I noticed that," you said, "stuck up on cottage gates,  
And in the backs of cars, and in shop windows.  
You planted that on us — slogan democracy —  
Prepared? Prepared for what? You left that out.  
You called your military big-talk, what?  
A Peace-Front, didn't you? We stood for that  
All right. The rest was simply plain Defence.  
Now it's a Blow for Freedom, and you know  
As well as I do that it's nothing but the devil  
In us poor followers, put to use by you."

I didn't know, I said, you'd feel like this.  
Keep a Stout Heart; We're going to Win Through.

"It's winning, is it, now?" you said.

I saw that I must change my argument.

I said: You've heard of German Concentration Camps?

"I seem to know the name, somehow," you said.

Fill up your mind, I said, with all the beastly things  
Reported from the Concentration Camps, and then  
Let fly your Cleansing Anger.

"*These bombs?*" you asked.

I nodded and agreed. You're quite a Realist!

"Am I?" you said. "All right, I'd better go,  
What's the address?"

I named a German town.  
You looked at me.

"That's funny, that is," you said.

"Ever been there yourself? I was, last summer.

A decent little place, friendly you know.

But that's all one," you said. "I'll give them Hell,

And when I've blasted all their well-kept gardens.

You'll give them Freedom, won't you? That'll be lovely

You *are* a missionary, aren't you?

Yes, I said, a sort of missionary.

And so are you.

Our Cause is Just; how can We Hesitate?

"You've said it, boss. Give us that Gospel,

We'll do a bit of crucifying ourselves, this time ——

No, I won't go!" you shouted.

You'll go, I said, for Freedom, Justice, Honour.

"In my mind," you said, "*my private mind*,  
I know what you intend, you warrior christian.  
What you hide from yourself in sentimental headlines  
Cannot be said in plain and simple speech,  
No decent tongue could say it to one man ——  
Would you geld me and get my heart's offspring for me?  
Yet you'll be my private conscience and compassion  
So that indecencies,  
And for a holy reason,  
Such as will shake a tyrant,  
May with God's blessing be performed on strangers  
And bring us to our ugliest. I won't go!"

You are under oath to obey, I said. You can't change now  
What you have said is treason, and serious.

"Freedom, Justice, Honour," you asked,  
"Treason to these? It's serious all right."

If all men were like you, I said, it might be different.

"I'm nothing special. Average, I should say.  
Wife and two kids, like you. I'm nothing special."

It's got to be, I said. There's no escape for us.

"What's the alternative?" you asked.

A tyranny like mine, but worse, I admitted.

"How could that be?" you said.  
"You haven't touched my being. I'm unspotted,  
At least as far as you're concerned.  
I will not be your butcher.  
I won't be Freedom's butcher, either.  
I am free enough" you said, "from any tyrant."

You may be free enough, I said, but there are others;  
That's the whole point of Concentration Camps.  
This other Tyranny might take your wife and children  
And put them to debauchery and torture.  
That's the alternative.

"Honestly," you said, after a moment,  
"I don't *see* an alternative.  
Is it worse to be a victim than a Tyrant?  
How can I choose? Where is the difference?  
You say he *might* do this; but *you've just done it*.  
Why handle horror when it suits your purpose?  
You know what torture does — to other people,  
Though you don't need to spot your cuffs with blood.  
I'll face that other tyrant when he comes  
And I want to be alive to do it properly,  
Not just a sacrifice on Freedom's altar,  
Caiaphas, eh?  
But wait a bit," you said. "What is his crime?"

I thought you'd think again, I said.

"Give it in general terms," you said. "No details now."

I said: *He takes the innocent and tortures them  
Body and mind, and some of them he kills.*

"Who'd think you ever talked in slogans now?  
Let's think that out together, that plain-speaking —  
You know that German town, that Price we've got to  
Pay,  
You wanted me to bomb it, *that one*, you know."

Yes, I said.



"Let's be clear and cool," you said.

"You know what bombs are?"

Yes, I said.

"Now, listen then," you said:

"*'He takes the innocent and tortures them  
Body and mind, and some of them he kills'* —  
That's wickedness," you said.

That's right, I said, it is.

No man can stand still under things of that sort, can he?

You understand, now that you've faced the Naked  
Truth,

What men of today have got to deal with.

*The world's an ugly place, a very ugly place,*  
(You looked away, and did not interrupt)

Someone has got to do some Cleaning Up.

I saw that, all along. My job's not easy, either,

Persuading people out of a perfectly harmless

Peacetime ignorance. We've Got to be Prepared . . .

I'm glad we've had this sensible talk together, I added.

It's good to get things off your chest sometimes.

Most men are Decent Chaps when you Get Down to them.

## II

For a day or two I couldn't forget that hour:

The last word ought, by rights, to have been with you...

We had hardly touched the difference between us,

Both hating tyranny and at such odds about it.

It can't be merely age, I said.

I've had my passion too, and I remember it.

Besides, I said, in spite of all the mud and slavery

That uniform, those clothes, to me and many thousands  
like me,  
Are signs of what I was and never thought to be:  
A man given a mission more than his own,  
Lifted from a ledger, lifted from pointless habit,  
Given a purpose, given a physical life —  
Why not admit that the army mended me?  
Men can be fellows, that's about what it came to —  
We found that out, I mean, and that was something.

“Given a Purpose?” you said. “Given a Physical Life?”  
Although the men you found could be your fellows  
Are, lots of them, now unnecessary heroes.  
This courage, comradeship, purpose, self-sacrifice,  
These are not qualities of war, you know,  
They're qualities of men.  
And after War the number of men is less,  
By simple subtraction, needing no argument . . .  
They made you ashamed to live to be yourself,  
Left you no respite; troubled you with atrocities;  
Offered to hang the Kaiser; got you sooner or later.  
And after four years and ten million single murders,  
The world a charnel, sick of death and anger  
And all the waste, waste, waste of holy human work,  
Came to an end with nothing but graves and famine,  
Pensions and poppies and unknown-warrior worship...  
That's twenty years ago — now they want others.  
They're at it again, with more efficient guns,  
More aeroplanes, more bombs, more lasting gas,  
Things they can really trust in, crying now:  
Freedom is in Danger, Defend it with all your Might.  
They're men, themselves, but they don't believe  
In men. They bait to catch a conscience,  
But, to put the world to rights,  
Set mothers filling shells, fathers begetting death.

They had to think of something, didn't they?  
They had to stop the rot.

Alas, for us,  
So little do they really trust our decent nature,  
They must save Freedom from us, by us, for us.  
Trot out that idiot Juggernaut of History!  
Fetch gardeners, shepherds, shopmen, commercial  
travellers,  
Give them a Purpose, lift them from Ledgers,  
Men must have Freedom and We will Defend it  
Torture for Torture till they can take it! —  
And yet, what else could they do?"

In spite of myself I could see no other answer:  
If men are not led they cannot fight for freedom,  
For you know, I said, the freedom of the world  
Is indeed in danger. The guns are real, I said.  
The devil is in action.

"Yes," you said, "and leaving out the guns and threats,  
The statesmen daily trample their own people,  
Foster their worst, spit shame upon their gentleness,  
Rob to maintain their right to leadership,  
And take the youngsters off to teach them cruelty  
And pride and lies and hatred."

You suddenly stopped, and turned your eyes to the  
window —

"Come and stand here," you said. "Quick! See, on  
that rose tree!"

A bullfinch, I said.

The wind was shaking the first of the fallen leaves  
Across the grass. And beyond the grass

My friendly looking beach tree tossed in the wind  
Against a dark blue sky.  
The bird played in the leaves  
And his shadow played in the grass.  
The top of a cloud behind the tree moved eastward.

“This evil is certainly here in this afternoon world,  
And yet, what else could they do?” you said.

The bullfinch flew down to his shadow,  
We stood side by side facing the window together,  
Eyeing the garden.

“Women are filling shells with man-destruction,  
And yet, what else could they do?” you said.  
“The mills are milling poison,  
Some of the guns they’re making now  
Can fire a shell that weighs a ton for twenty miles,  
And when it touches earth  
The crater blasted by its one explosion  
Could take two hundred corpses in its apex.  
It takes great skill to make such guns  
And such shells — and yet, what else could they do?  
You cannot hear the hissing of the leaves,” you said,  
“And yet you know it, you’d almost swear you see it,  
The sighing dance of the tree makes visible  
That soft autumnal noise . . . And as for bombs,  
We’ve always got those ready, up our sleeves,  
And mustard gas, blistering agony, that as well  
Ready to hand — mark the word — if need be:  
If Freedom needs it, if Christianity demands it,  
As by their parsons and their posters I am told they do.  
What else could we do, we artisans and housewives?  
O desperate, bankrupt, blindly led, crying: What else?”

Silence fell and you made me drink it  
So that we heard, as well as saw, the hissing  
Of the forgotten leaves.  
And out of the bottom of the silence  
As quiet as my thoughts, with far away words  
I thought I said: You mean, what worse could we do?

"The cloud behind your tree is a tower of light,  
Keep your eyes on that cloud," you said,  
"And being a man, answer me fairly, as a cloud might.  
Have I belied War, except as words must fail us?"

No, I said.

"Bit by bit, man by man,  
Murder by murder, man by man,  
Taken piecemeal, it is as bad, at least,  
As I have said?"

In itself it is altogether bad, I said.

"Yet Freedom is in danger," you said.  
"Will you defend it?"

I will, with all my might.

"What is your might?" you said.

A man's, at least, I said.

"That is, your reason and your soul," you said.  
"Only by these weapons man is master of the world,  
Better than the beasts, master of himself.  
These have served well and surely for a million years,

These have made a hornless, fangless race  
Stronger than hunger, ice, or mountain.  
Armed, one in each hand, you are wise,  
You are impregnably wise.  
Tyranny being rife and ugly, as you say,  
Still, patiently ask reason if war is good or bad,  
For that is the question between us.  
Ask your own soul if war is good or bad.  
Do not blind them wilfully with the *word*,  
But see it full length, its gashes and its hatred,  
Mark that its sole strength is in dealing death,  
Know that the dead are neither wise nor good,  
Can never more be free, nor love a country,  
That death can only act on living men,  
Can only destroy their reason and their soul —  
The very faculties, the only faculties  
By which a man becomes Mankind,  
In union of which, and not of flesh with metal  
The nobility of Justice is maintained.  
Do not make tyranny an excuse for surrender.”

I saw the Tree's shape doubled in the Cloud's,  
The Cloud's shape in the Tree's. Your words did not now  
Drive out the good world, as your angry words had done.  
I heard or thought a voice like yours, that said:  
"Do not appeal to death, saying, What else can I do?  
Ask life, What more can we do? This is your answer.  
Most men are decent chaps when you get down to  
them."

## III

Days have gone by and still you don't come back.  
Why did you close the only refuge I had?  
The storm rages about me, now.

It is too late for quietness such as you praised.  
My brothers and friends are strong with their conviction.  
The work they do together fills them with strength  
Such as they dumbly longed for when they spent  
Their daylight hours and bought a salary . . .  
And I sit railing here, but half a man.  
Who were you, after all?  
How can one "arm oneself with soul and reason"?  
In this world of united purpose I want something to do!

"Do not sit railing here," you said.

Why did you make me watch the tree? I said.

"Because it was there," you said, "and you could see it.  
A thing, with life and senses of its own,  
Which from a seed has followed, day and night,  
The easy truth of its own quiet nature."

I know it in all its lights, I said.  
Alas. I do not ask for parables now, to help me.

"This is no parable of a tree," you said,  
"But common, inescapable fact; since we divide  
All substance without doubt into two kinds:  
The living, and the inert,  
In which great cleavage through the world we know  
Mankind and treekind are inseparably brothers.  
The same life stirs them, and the self same purpose;  
To pass this parentage to younger counterparts,  
And, living in time, in time to cease from living.  
Your beech grows and colours, fruits and falls,  
In intricate and clear-cut difference  
From ash and oak and others,  
Each tree being good of its kind by self-obedience,



The whole purpose of beech-mast being intrinsic:  
To do its living best to be that kind of creature.  
Surely in every man the best of man is minted,  
Life is his opportunity, his peace of being is to prove it.  
Doubt this and all's frustrated.  
Whatever is your life-giver is the tree's;  
You cannot otherwise define him, need to name him,  
But his law and liking must be in your freedom."

Which I had thought to defend, I said.

“No threat,” you said, “less than annihilation  
of all men  
Imperils a thing so bound into his pulse.  
Man’s difference of kind is in his soul and reason,  
His heritage is welded with his kind,  
It is just for man to be free, having reason and soul,  
This is our instinct for man’s nature.  
*Something that merits freedom.*  
Leave that root nature only time to leaf,  
If man but lives, his heritage is certain. . .  
Your Tyrant’s no more than a man,” you said,  
“He cannot change mankind.”

He's mad, I said. He must be!

“False to man’s permanent nature —  
That is mad,” you said.  
“If he is not on the course that kind lays down  
For man to verify, he is sure to fail.”

His converts will maintain his ways, I said.

"Will they also be mad?" you asked.

Yes or no — how can I tell? I said.

"Surely. If they maintain inhuman ways,  
If they seek to frustrate the course  
That kind lays down for man to follow,  
They will be mad," you said,  
"And in the end mere will of man  
To be invincibly himself  
Must bend them all aside.  
Life is by heritage unshakeable of purpose."

You take a very long view, I said.

"Not as long a view as eyeless life," you said.

But power is in their hands, I said,  
And those who oppose them die, and they increase.

"Hold firm and cool awhile longer," you said.  
"Are you convinced they do man's nature wrong?  
Do not let terror or even suffering dictate an answer:  
Are you convinced they do man's nature wrong?"

You know you have no need to ask it, I said.  
The world of nameless men agrees to damn them.  
Terror and suffering are here good evidence,  
By them I know they do man's nature wrong.

"Cancer?" you said.  
"If terror and suffering are good evidence?"

Again, you yourself know the difference, I said.  
Cancer has no party,  
No will to break man's spirit, no intention.  
But terror and suffering are their *instruments*,  
We watch them handle and use them,  
And that they use them against their fellow-men  
Is itself an instance that from heart within

They do man's nature wrong.

"Do they themselves believe this? Are their motives  
As they interpret them, to do humanity harm?  
Do they seek to justify their acts?"

None of us know their hearts, I said,  
But if by words they justify such things as ——  
All the world knows —— they have daily done,  
If, in perversity, they call their motives good,  
We still believe and know that their cruelty affronts  
And thwarts and wrongs man's nature.  
What they do is evil.

"It is the same," you said, "with those who fall into  
war.  
For terror and suffering are war's only instruments,  
We see them handle and use them,  
And that they use them against fellow men  
Is itself instance that from heart within  
They do man's nature wrong."

None of us knows their hearts, I said.

"They do not hear their own," you said,  
"For even if by words they justify such things  
As war must daily do,  
Even if they call their motives worthy  
You still believe that cruelty of man  
Affronts and thwarts and wrongs man's nature.  
These are your words," you said.  
"O, if your faith has any virtue left,  
Do not deny them for a symbol of Freedom,  
Nor for any motive, not for compassion even.  
Be yourself pitiless and desperate with War."

What is the good of pleading thus with me? I said,  
The storm rages about us now.  
It is too late for quietness such as you praised.  
By myself I can do nothing now.

"The only way to do nothing," you said, "is to die.  
For forty years you have pestered life for its purpose.  
You have had one answer, though for forty years  
You have rejected it. The purpose of life is to live.  
Is man too proud a thing to take that answer?  
It would be poor faith even in a gardener  
To swear that seen effects are the only good.  
Who knows what the lifting of a head may do?"

Man cannot live to himself alone, I said.  
It is surely in his nature to serve his kind.

"But only live, only give channel to kind," you said;  
"Others will feel your life, accepting your service.  
Who knows what the thinking of a thought may do?  
Think, and as you think, you live,  
And as you live, you are seen to live  
By those whose eyes are about you;  
Or think, and as you think, you love,  
And as you love you are beloved  
By those whose lives are about you;  
Or think, and as you think, you speak,  
And as you speak you are understood,  
And as you are understood, believed.  
The lifting of a finger is not lost," you said.  
"A good thought, a kindness of being,  
An eye thankful for autumn, a sorrow borne,  
A wave of the hand, a memory recalled,  
A silence, a just answer, a clear refusal,

A step further — thus advances our kind.  
Because no eye can measure  
The marks these chisels make,  
In your impatience you doubt them,  
You, who can give a man his birthright  
In saying goodnight to him.  
Why do you say it is too late for quietness now?"

And again by some strange force of affection in you  
You drew me silently to the window,  
For you did not call me, or beckon, did you?  
I was constrained to stand equal with you,  
Perhaps by the golden light.  
And at some moment, no more noticed than  
A single leaf-fall, you became  
The space about me:  
I could not turn, nor stir the air,  
Nor cast a shadow without you.  
As I stood, receiving the autumn,  
The silence melted before my heart-beats,  
I heard in that your footsteps  
Mounting, mounting, mounting.



*"When a new desire has formed in the human heart, when a new plexus is forming among the nerves, then the revolutions of nations are already decided, and histories unwritten are written."*

——Towards Democracy  
Edward Carpenter



FRAGMENT FROM

MON JOURNAL

by

AN AIS NIN

I left a Paris lit like the inside of a Cathedral, full of shadowy niches, black corners, twinkling oil-lamps. In the half mist hanging over it all the violet, blue, red and green lights looked like stained glass windows all wet and alive with candle light. I could not have recognized the faces of the friends I was leaving.

My bags were carried by a soldier whose shoes were too big for him. I suffered deeply from the pain of separation, I felt every cell and cord snapping in me, the parting from a form of life I loved, from an atmosphere I knew I would never find again, from a softness, a humanness, an intimacy with people and a city, the parting from a rhythm grown very deep in me, from mysterious, enveloped nights, from the obsession of war which gave a bitter and vivid taste to all living, from the sound of anti-aircraft guns, of airplanes passing, sirens lamenting like fog horns in stormy nights at sea.

When all these threads of tenderness stifled me, these umbilical cords of regrets paralyzed me, I looked from the shore of Lisbon to the giant bird Clipper waiting at the end of the pier, in the sun. I felt so heavy

that I could not believe it could carry me into space. The giant bird would not rise, I felt. There could not be, anywhere in the world, space and air and light where the nightmare of the war did not exist.

There it waited, all silver touched with the sun, and strangely we walked over the lower wings of the bird to get into it, the lower wings resting on the water. A woman took me to the ladies' room to if I carried revolver or camera. Then we were told to strap ourselves to the armchairs and the order was repeated in electric letters over the door. The armchairs were wide, deep, and comfortable. No one was allowed to move about while we started upward.

The bird's body was large, twice as wide as a railroad car. Its color seemed to have been made out of the colors of clouds, all white pearl greys, or silver. At first it ran along the water with only one motor starting, then another, then another. I felt the weight of the bird too heavy, as one feels it in the nightmare at times, and that it would never rise. It was heavier than its wings could bear. But as it ran along the sea, it gathered speed, and strength, and then the motors worked at full blast and lifted the bird into space.

It was strange, this not breaking with the earth as one does in a ship, this not feeling the anchors lifted, cords straining, the slow parting from the shore, but to be suddenly in space, magically covering distance, without fetters or anchors tied to one. In pure space, of gold and a whiteness far whiter than snow.

As soon as the bird began its flight I ceased suffer-



ing. The sense of distance and separation was annihilated. It was the dream, in which one had the power to reach all places, and to return to them as fast as one's desire. This was as fast as one's desire, that was what was magical about it. True my desire pointed towards France, but up here France and America were both very small, and the height to which this great human Clipper bird rose made one enter a non-human world with a mystical detachment. Among the clouds all pain seemed dissolved by some great impersonal acceptance of destiny.

The crew was composed of lean, sensitive types of men, not at all like the butcher types who drive trucks or autocars. They seemed made for the air. They gave us chewing gum against the pain in the ears felt when the airplane rises too fast or descends from great heights they gave us magazines and blankets.

The bird travelled with greater steadiness than a train. I could write peacefully in the whiteness and steadiness, or look out of the small windows into the landscape of clouds. White mirages appeared, a chain of hills, elephant grey ships in the distance, islands, mountains, sea gulls, then the whiteness opened like torn cotton and disclosed the sea below. Then came the Azores, all black rocks and black sand, on which we landed with great smoothness.

The sun was gone. A soft drizzle came down on us. In spite of a few people and the pastel colored houses, this fragment of the Atlantide looked uninhabited. The women wore long navy blue capes with enormous hoods

over their heads. The place seemed severed from all the world, peaceful, dreamlike. People on islands seem always ready to disappear, they seem free of suffering, because the separation is already made for them, they are accustomed to isolation.

For an hour we walked about, with this mood of cut offness and the peace that it gives to be alone. Then we turned to the bird, waiting in the misty rain. The sea was swelling. The bird could not gain its speed. Its flanks hit against the waves with great violence. Its weight seemed too great for the motors. Over and over again in its race along the water, it collided with the huge swell of the sea and seemed about to break from the shock. Once, twice, thrice. The nose of the clipper bumped and the propellers raised the water all over the top and against the windows.

We sat strapped to our armchairs, feeling every shock. A feeling is born between people on the Clipper, born of the unacknowledged anxiety. The air still causes fear, because we are not familiar with it. The danger is no greater, but we are lifted above our earth roots, we are thrust into a strange atmosphere. The bird does not shake as much as a train, or plunge as deep as a ship, but we are afraid. Men looked at their watches to time the take-off. It was a long, and the Clipper was examined immediately afterwards to see if it had cracked anywhere.

And now came the night, and as we sat down before the small, light dinner tables it was impossible to know where one was — on sea, or land, or air. The

bird was steady. The windows showed only blackness, and the vibration of the motors was similar to a ship's. Some of the armchairs had been turned into bunks, as in the trains.

After dinner almost everyone went to bed because we were expected to reach Bermuda at dawn. I slept until midnight.

About midnight I opened my eyes because the bird was shaking and plunging so violently. And I saw streaks of lightning illuminating the wings of the Clipper. I felt the great space under me, and the sea, and the enormousness of the black clouds. I felt the full loneliness of space and sea and danger, the loneliness of man in his inventions, his smallness and the immensity of the cosmic storms.

At the foot of my bunk lay my writings of the past four years, so much suffering and passion, weighing so little tonight, carried by the imperfect wings of man, struck into insignificance by lightning and hail. The Clipper bird trembled all through its silver grey body, I felt its weight struggling against the wind, the strain of its body piercing the storm clouds.

I lay back feeling light and unreal, without fear, only aware of loneliness, of great darkness. No fear of death, but awareness of the loneliness which is death. I lay without moving, feeling every struggle of the motors, every air pocket into which we fell, every trembling after the wind's buffetings. And every now and then a long lightning vibration lit up the wing under my window.

Then I saw the black clouds tearing open, again like cotton pulled apart, black cotton this time, pulled apart, all in long shreds, and I saw the wings emerge from the blackness, as if tearing through them, and leaving the rough edges in tatters, and the tatters growing thinner and thinner, and finally vanishing, and then the wings seemed to hook onto enormous stars. At each tip of the wings there was a star which seemed fixed there for eternity. Then I lay back and went to sleep, because of my faith in the stars.

Bermuda should have appeared at dawn but it only appeared five hours later, like a Paradise, and everyone was so shaken by the night that they stepped off the Clipper with joy. We rested a whole night in Bermuda, and took off again in the early morning . . .

✧   ✧   ✧   ✧   ✧   ✧   ✧

### THE MAKER

It is the fashion to speak in the falling cadence of disillusion. The world ends with a whimper not with a bang, and it is merely prudence thus to foretell and so to feel the temper of now and tomorrow, the poet being only the doctor to take the pulse and diagnose the ailment, always accepting death as the one known factor. I hate that falsehood. I hate the time's defilement of art by politics. It is the gift of the poet to contradict chaos, to hear the YES! of the womb and loud along the ear of man to say it, making another space, and a new time.

*Dilys Bennett Laing*

## NUNC DIMITTIS

When womb-walled hangs my child  
in man's own image  
I shall not forget how he is nailed  
already on the cross of his own damage,  
already destined to death  
and before death, grief,  
already the hero and the victim, both,  
of enigmatic life.

Shall I anticipate with joy  
his leaving the womb?  
Would I not rather let him stay  
in that safe home?  
Would I not rather bid him back  
to chaos, unconceived,  
than urge him forth to terror and the wreck  
of god by man enslaved?

Sleep in the shapeless dark!  
Child! Come not forth!  
Man wreaks too hideous a work  
in this, the little country of the earth.  
I, who am woman, betrayed  
by man's great sin,  
swear I shall not contribute to the deed  
by bringing forth a son.

O silence! Be complete!  
Stars, be extinguished!  
Now the world ends. Now Bach is mute,  
Prometheus no more anguished.  
Euclid, good-night! Sleep well with the dead planets!  
Forget the wasted chronicle of time,  
my Shakespeare! In this end of aeons and minutes  
evoke no more the dream.

Summon no more the courage  
and the terror  
of man who makes his bitter marriage  
with death and horror.  
But, lest I falter in my wish for sleep,  
torment me with no memory of love.  
Do not deceive my sorrow with the hope  
that it is sweet to live, —

sweet to behold the day,  
a privilege to share  
sorrow and hunger with men beneath the sky,  
or any pain or fear  
so long as love hides somewhere on the earth,  
so long as the eyes see, and the stars burn.  
Then let my child grow valiant and come forth!  
His mother is foresworn.

*Dilys Bennet Laing*

### AFTERNOON TEA

TO M. R-H. AND H.R.

The dusky Chinese tea, tasting of shadow,  
hot from the thin cups, comforts our dry throats.  
Our thoughts are all of war. We speak our thoughts.  
The window opens on the sunlit meadow.

The rusks are sweet. Our taste of them is bitter.  
Our tongues are heavy with a lost world's grief  
as still we practice, for a short while safe,  
a lost world's rite of tea and toast and butter.

A German woman and an English woman  
and a young Jewess in a neutral land:  
freed of our flags, we strive to comprehend  
the rupture of a world we love in common.

The decorous room with sanity encloses  
our bodies, but our outraged thoughts are fled  
to cities where our sisters, screaming mad,  
hunt for small corpses in the wreck of houses.

*Dilys Bennett Laing*

SONG OF THE THREE MARYS

You who stumble blind  
through the pastures of blood,  
you the crucified,  
the bewildered pawns of the culpable ——  
O blameless and betrayed  
lift up your heads  
that you may catch the scent  
of mountain flowers  
blown to your nostrils  
from the innocent height.  
With burning eyeballs gaze  
through the torn smoke  
at little tranquil houses clustered high  
on the green forehead  
of the unravished hill.

Listen ——  
behind the blasphemy of guns,  
above the eternal shriek  
of slaughtered childhood  
you shall hear the trustful laughter  
of happier children  
and the singing of peasants  
as they beat their bright garments  
in the rushing water.



Remember therefore,  
though remembering  
make going more hideous,  
meadowland and the cool sea  
and the eyes of companions  
and the dyed flags of flowers  
and sunlight warm upon your unpierced flesh.

And as you fall broken  
among the red and bitter ruins,  
as your life pours  
from your crushed entrails  
and thought is cast forth forever  
from the blasted skull  
*spit out also upon the field  
the lies of your masters.*

*Dilys Bennet Laing*

### THE ETERNAL

Man imperishably stands  
through his thousand destinies.  
There are planets in his eyes.  
there are eons in his hands.

Time in him is ever now.  
Yesterday is in his veins  
and tomorrow in his loins  
and forever on his brow.

*Dilys Bennet Laing*

*PSALM*

The unweighed god  
the power and pathos  
in the cloud concealed

breaks in thunder  
on the peaks and pours  
to the cups of the valley.

The filled cups flash  
the lakes cry back the sky  
and propagate the sun.

O Bach, O deep brook  
of the deepest cleft!  
strike a toccata  
counterpoise the stars.

Dye with the sun, O Blake,  
your clear and turbulent waters!

Aspire to the cloud  
arise to the breast of Yaweh  
to fall again, to spill the broken cloud  
into the arid valleys of the brain.

*Dilys Bennett Laing*

## DE PROFUNDIS

## I

There are things the blood remembers  
for knowing which the brain is still too young.  
The blood speaks, in the arterial chambers,  
of circumstance forgotten and shapes that sprang  
from chaos and subsided into jungle  
long before man was mammal. We can place  
no seal upon them, and the mind can angle  
deep for an answer and not hook a guess.

## II

The measured form, the artificial pattern  
of fugue and sonnet from the dark flow forth  
even as the feathers of the speckled bittern,  
even as the fern upfronding from the earth.  
Ocean and planet, iron and hair and blood  
spring not more certain out of matter's womb  
than speech or music or the myth of god  
reared from the chasm of the racial dream.

*Dilys Bennett Laing*



## P O E M

I think regretfully of all the modest clerks,  
who so much tempted by the glamor of their work,  
that never do they ever care to know  
how fast the worlds outside their hearing go.

Nor as they dream of every raise in pay  
or fill the lucky floors of downtown stores,  
how the menace grows around them day on day,  
that soon will come with unkind face  
and take them to a ghastly meetingplace.

Nor as alert, they squat in motorcars  
with hurried scan of billboard and initial page  
to tell them what is best for decent folk to buy,  
will they turn their ears away from stars.

No rude one ever asks about the underhanded deals  
that send the pretty bombing planes to other lands,  
while workmen smile because they have their meals,  
without suspecting how or why so many armies die.

I think continually of all the faithful clerks  
who come importantly and go with empty talk,  
and in their narrow glasses to and fro  
they have no need to further look or know.

For they have just so much of hope marked out  
as the desk has shining duties and the clock allow,  
of what is doing Sunday in the radioland,  
and how the comic-strip will make out better in the end,  
and they need never be without a penny or a friend.

*William Peterson*

## WE HAVE FORGOTTEN VENUS

We have forgotten Venus rising from the sea,  
and we walk at the dark edge crusted with salt  
in the night.  
Seasound and wavesound and sound of mourning  
and the wail of dogs on the dark shore beyond.  
For us there is silence.

The rock rises with threat of destruction.  
The fog brings confusion and panic.  
Wavesound and seasound, the tedious pounding of tides  
and the roar of the beasts at the rock.

The voice in the mike booms from nowhere,  
counting the dead, "Last minute news!"  
"God," cries my father turning in sleep,  
and he howls, "Turn it off!"

And the sea heard only dimly through doors  
and through walls never changes its tone.

I hear her struggling within the coppered archway of  
the vault.  
Do you not hear her rising there again  
where she was buried,  
you who laughed when I grew sick  
and passed the plate to educate the heathen black?

Nor does the moon cause such a rise of tide  
over the dunes to the door in this light,  
the tinny light of afternoon piercing the heart,  
shining back from the surfaces of water,  
nor malignance of stars nor cards, this tide.

Water intrudes upon the house,  
a pool of terror in the hall,  
so that murder is rudely interrupted,  
and mother drops her dirty work,  
the acid destruction of the past,  
so that the past may be retained.

Disintegrate. My father's house:  
after the funeral meats are gone  
the spirit dies. And she:

Mother. Mother. Mother.  
On this picture and on this.

I hear the sea and those that hang,  
the beggared bodies on the beach,  
and those that starve. Look.

Do you not see him? How he glares?  
Even the stones made capable,  
and the sea moved.

*Robert E. Symmes*

### PERSEPHONE

*"We have passed the Great Trauma. These wounds disclose  
our loss."*

memory: farfields of morning,  
maimed winter, wheel and hoofhammered weeds.  
bare patches of earth. We heard rumor of rape  
among the women who wait at the wells with dry urns.  
talk among leaves and among the old men  
who sift tin cans and seashells searching for driftwood  
to make fires on cold hearthstones. Stone hearts

and arteries hardened to stone.

This sound of our mourning . . .  
  wailing of reeds,  
comes over the ice and the grey wastes of water.  
We listen: it shrieks thru the ruins of cities,  
whistles in shellholes  
and freezes like ether in our lungs

Shades falling under the oakshadow . . . shade upon  
shade,  
intent with their sorrow. The lust of such sorrow  
listless, moving over the leafmold,  
footmolded and hoofmolded, spoors of past violence.  
From such clay our roots writhe, sucking the life  
from corpsemold and footclay  
and mold of the skull rooting.

Spore-spotted Onan, baldheaded, trickling with seed,  
 moved among us, or troops of swift women pursuing  
 the leopard  
 passed. The quiet unbroken, dark beneath dark  
 branches spotted with light; or a flute in the morning  
 made truce, awakening the leaves like birds.  
 We shot green from the bark to flute music,  
 moving out from the trunk in a dream.

The sun was like gold on my body,  
roots in the cold dark below me and arms  
from the slender trunk showered in gold light and  
fingers green seeking the sun.  
shadows,

Lost, lost such peace and Persephone lost.  
Last dream brought silence,  
silent thread of death-threatening dream.



We remember in symbols such violence:  
the splintering of rock, the shock of the trauma.  
Shade falls under the shadow . . . shade upon shade,  
spotted with bonewhite, splinter of driftwood,  
the bark wet with terror, no sleep,  
only waiting. Only we wait, our wounds barely healed  
for the counterattack before sunrise.

*Robert E. Symmes*

### SONNET

I would be permanent, immobile as stone,  
This face a perfect mask, and this warm blood  
Chilled to an ichor; forehead no more sewn  
With cares, reveal a calm and changeless mood.  
Then I might stand out from life's long diffusion  
Isolate, feeling Time wash smoothly past,  
Being immortal, gazing on illusion;  
Decay, death that consumes all life at last.

But even as I formulate this vision,  
Speaking ironically from lips of clay,  
I know that what I utter is derision,  
That I am one with world that wanes away,  
Flesh like a candle guttering into waste  
And all my living tainted with its taste.

*Derek Savage*





# NOTES OF A PROPAGANDIST

## Part I

### LANGUAGE AND OUR WAY FORWARD

by

ALFRED HY. HAFFENDEN

It is very evident at the present point in human history that *the Earth is a unit* and that *the Human-being is a unit*. And in between these two glorious units is the furious murderous clamour of the nation-States, the shriekings of the nationalisms, the claims to sovereignty and independence, things which have ever been bloody and of a glory which, to say the least of it, has ever been *questionable*. In the sacred names of Earth and Man it is the purpose of this essay to question this *nationhood* which can become the basis and vehicle of such insane thoughts and projects, such hysterical feelings and such barren wanton destruction as we now have come to know only too well and with day-to-day familiarity.

Earth and Human-Being are living Beings, they are units clearly defined and obvious through the ordinance of Divine Nature Itself. (For some time yet probably people may not be able to recognize Earth as a living being in the full sense of the words; but never-

theless our argument remains: the Earth is a unit clearly defined by Nature, indeed of an inviolable unity.) It is clearly evident that both Earth and Human-Being are complete organisms, complete instruments wherein and whereon Divine Energies may play, perfect (in one sense of the word) vehicles for the "infolding and unfolding" of universal Life through universal Law.

Further, a Human-being manifesting upon Earth, insofar as his earthly nature is concerned, is a child of the whole Earth. The earth-nature of man, which he puts on by means of generation and puts off in dying, has affinity with and derives from the whole Earth-life. *Man-on-Earth is a child of all the Earth. And both Earth and Human-being are capable of being prime vehicles of the one and only ultimate Sovranty, universal Life itself.*

The primacy of Earth and Human-being in the hierarchy of manifest beings is fairly (!) obvious; it does not need an argument to prove it, still less a bloody war to establish it. It is a primacy that none can challenge, still less overthrow. Both Earth and Man are endowed with supreme positions, with superior powers; as befits vehicles of Sovranty, both are royal and invincible. The Earth, a globe in the system of Sol, is a unit; the Human, an individual self-conscious Soul, is a unit.

We all feel that the nation also is a unit; and many philosophers have laboured hard to show that the nation is a very important unit indeed. Without much success. Nations are indeed units, and I do not doubt that a nation is a thing created and nationhood a state ordained

by Divine Nature Itself; but pretty well throughout the modern era of the (European) nations, nations — more properly nation-States — have been the tools of murderous power politics, the vehicles not so much of the universal Life as of parasitical disease and mechanical death. The planet members of the solar system are not armed against each other, human beings are not by Natural constitution and circumstance armed against each other, but the nation-State has been a militant and military entity from its inception, and still remains so.

What is the Earth? Everybody knows. What is a Man? Everybody knows. What is a nation? Very few people have even a small clear idea of what a nation is. True, everybody knows what a nation-State governmental authority and power is. But that is not a nation. The precise meaning of the term nation is not easily stated. And, by the way, the term State, though perhaps not difficult of definition by clear-thinking practical minds, is a very greasy one indeed, one used in many turns of mental legerdemain and dishonest intellectual maneuvering.

The nations are all now involved in the world-wide network of militarized capitalist States, so that what true benign nationhood is, of Divine intention and design and harmonious with the true life of Earth and Man, is not a matter easily to be discerned.

It would seem that a nation is a part of mankind distinguished from the rest by region of domicile, variety of race, and language. And each of these three

constituents of nationhood has been and is used by States in their game of power politics, imperialism or exploitative dominance of mankind; State expansion is, among other things, a process of annexation of territory, eradication and infusion of race, prohibition and imposition of language. Until the era of "sovereign" States is past, therefore, it will scarcely be possible for mankind to realize just what nationhood is, and to evaluate it. For at present the feeling of men for the nation to which they by nature belong, the true nationalism that is, is exploited by States and distorted and perverted to evil economic and political ends. *For nationhood is vitally related to the natural hierarchy of (every kind of) leadership within the general Human order on Earth.* And capitalist Statism degrades and perverts all kinds of leaders, and abuses and exploits the feelings of men for leaders: machine-modes and machine-power have poisoned the human mind and soul.

It would be well at this point for us to get three basic ideal concepts clear.

*Society or Community.* The Divine-Natural order of humans in the aggregate is Human society or community. Any definite instituted true aggregation of humans is a society or community. (True society or community is a thing about which men now do or can know very little. It is the subject of dreams, aspiration, pursuit and work on the part of truly progressive men.)

*State.* In society a tribunal is required to arbitrate in disputes, to adjudicate concerning the rights and interests of persons, families, groups and companies, and

to define, censure and remedy misdemeanors, to prevent offences and to restrain, correct, heal and restore offenders. Such functions belong to the true State in a true society: in other words, the State is the guild of justice.

*Nation.* A nation is a society defined by territory, race and language, which three factors give it its unity and its own distinct culture. A nation, then, is a human-cultural unit. Further, we may go on to declare that nations, like planets and humans, are not by Natural constitution and circumstance armed against each other.

Planets, nations and humans are of the grand *social* order of the universe, not of the predatory (dis)order of a fallen planet like the Earth in its disequilibrium (which will, of course, in due time be rectified). The welfare of a nation, like that of a planet, is in Divine Nature's keeping; there is no need for men to rob and kill on its behalf nor to defend it against destruction. And further, the life of a nation is in the Divine Economy nothing like as important as the life of a planet or of a human; it is evidently not an entity of the same indispensable quality as Earth and Man, compared with theirs its order of life is ancillary and ephemeral.

In striving for salvation from capitalism and all evil, therefore, and in trying to pursue his own real evolution, Man will be helping to re-equilibrate the Earth and to re-instate true nationhoods, thereby discovering once again his real and benign nationalisms. Now, the life and salvation of mankind are bound up indissolubly with language; the development of consciousness from the human stage onward depends utterly — in com-



mon with other factors, of course — upon language. And language is one of the constituents of nationhood. *That function of language, however, namely, correct symbolism, indispensable for thought-communication, upon which primarily all-human salvation depends, is not identical with that function of language, namely, vital and social intercourse, which is the main element in nearly all national-language use and literature.*

We shall not get far with the practical problems which language presents to man — the task of whose solution I do not believe can now much longer be evaded — unless we accustom ourselves to considering in their distinctness at least these two of several functions which language fulfills for us. And I cannot just now forbear the thought that these two chief functions, thought-communication and life-intercourse, are somewhat analogically and perhaps vitally related respectively to the “vertically” and “horizontally” of Derek Savage on p. 114 of *The Phoenix* Vol. II, No. 1. (A comprehensive study of the functions of language and introduction to the symbolism will be found in *The Meaning of Meaning* by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards. I do not agree, in philosophy or linguistics, with these writers; but their work is monumental. C. K. Ogden is the chief elaborator of Basic English, in my opinion a ridiculous and offensive so-called system in several respects, though it brings to light certain linguistic realities and makes one think. In my judgement the chief defects of Basic English are: small vocabulary, disregard of symmetry and regularity, reckless use of terms in several senses, contempt for grammatical symboliza-

tion, destructive rejection of valuable traditional elements common to many languages. In my view the principles and forms embodied in Ido—— reformed and perfected Esperanto —— are much nearer solving the problem of universal human language than are those of Basic English.)

It is at once amazing and reassuring how throughout all existence the fact of *duality* manifests itself, e. g. in the “being” and “action” of the Derek Savage essay previously referred to. And here in this matter of the nature of language we find there is no way forward for us unless we realize its duality and begin consciously to use it in its two functions. *As we distinguish between thought and life, so we must distinguish between language used mainly in thought and universal interest (introspective, vertical, being) and language used mainly in the interest of daily living and sociality (extrovert, horizontal, action).* And I think we must conclude, also, that as the soul of Man progresses, as his consciousness expands, he will more and more realize that *the mode of the vertical, of correct thought-communication*, is the leading and more powerful one of the two, and that *the mode of the horizontal, of communal action and social intercourse* will increasingly be transfused and illumined by it.

Now, thought is human, hence the ages-long demand for a universal language. And, by the way, I may here remark how surprising it is to find that many ordinary simple men, quite innocent of language learning and problems of thought communication, express of themselves, without the subject having been broached,

their conviction that unity of peoples and world peace cannot be achieved without a common language for the human race. And now, in addition to the consideration that Man's inner life and thought-activity is a Human thing, raised above such levels as those upon which national distinctions are manifest — inasmuch as the same heavens revolve round all territories and the same mother earth maintains and unites all territories — we now find that physical communication in many forms has now overrun all boundaries of nations and has begun to make the inhabitants of Earth one and indivisible in some social senses. Necessities of human commerce have laid foundations of worldwide social intercourse, and steamboat, railway, telegraph, telephone, radio, cinema, have now enlarged, intensified and accelerated that intercourse and created a demand for and possibility of something in the nature of a unified world-cultural life. And between them radio and cinema practically demand an international language; they add their voices to those of Human scholarship and Human social, economic and political necessity.

At first thought one might conjecture that a world language could be made to serve the most serious function, thought-communication, and that the national languages could remain custodians and servants of the lesser but immensely more widespread and voluminous one, vital-intercourse. But this can scarcely be; especially as there certainly is a demand for a world language for vital-intercourse as well as for thought-communication. Probably the world language will crystallize at two

levels, for thought ( primary ) and life ( secondary ), though these two will interpenetrate and passage between them be easy, and beneath the world language various vestiges of national languages will continue to serve special familiar purposes.

To the literati this might seem a dreary prospect. But then do the literati really matter anyway? It is, in my opinion, questionable whether the literati as a class are the best friends of man, of progress or of language. And even the philosophic, scientific and educational worlds in most of their branches are strongholds of tradition and reaction. The tremendous inertia of capitalism and debased mechanized humanity holds nearly everyone in every walk of life to a great degree in its paralytic thrall. But then the literati are in some important ways the very makers, the pioneers, promoters, setters of standards, of language. And it is, I think, precisely because the literati in general have fought shy of and largely opposed, by deed if not by word, international language problems that the international language project is no further advanced to-day than it is. The other major reason for international language backwardness is, of course, the complete international-political world debacle.

*The sensible literatus then, in my opinion, would tackle international language problems and begin to use his gifts in that sphere, thereby much improving his powers of thought and expression and learning, by practice and experience, many things concerning the nature and relations of things, thoughts and words (or referents, references and symbols.)*

For the evidence and adequate discussion of many

points in this somewhat scrappy and *ad hoc* dissertation the reader must be referred to the extensive literature on international language problems and on semantics, the science of meaning and symbolism, that is now available and still growing. A cardinal proposition, however, that I wish to put forward is this: That it is a perfectly natural procedure for savants to compile, devise and construct a regular, symmetrical and logical language out of the elements provided by the natural languages. Such a language, though "artificial", is no more merely mechanical than any other, and, no less than any other, can be and become a work of art and a means to art. This is so because such an international language is essentially a human and not a mechanical thing.

Many literati and some savants have discouraged the idea and project of an international language. From some reading one reluctantly concludes that on occasion some scholars, like many journalists, will "say anything". But, I reiterate, the literatus is just the one who now ought to interest himself in international language, for the movement will never get far if the literati keep aloof, as they more than any other people can make it go, go truly and beautifully, can establish and exalt it. The European is the great mother civilization and crowning culture of all humankind. The great need to-day is for a (really) Human and (really) European doctrine, for a humane European "patriotism" such as I have been preaching now for seven years. It would be well to express such a doctrine and

all-inclusive patriotism in an all-human language; and philology has to conclude that the only recommendable all-human language is a pan-european one.

As examples of unhelpfulness in scholars and literati I may mention the following. The author of *Impenetrability* (1926. The Hogarth Essays, Second Series, III) ends his get-you-nowhere pamphlet with the judgement: "An international language in the present nationalistic civilization cannot hope to be a very subtle or personal vehicle, and as a literary language is a thousand years off." To which one cannot help replying that it requires something other than "subtlety" and "personality" to put the world right at present (January, 1940) ! And more seriously, the world was never so much in need of truth, and truth of "correct symbolism." The author's few remarks on systems of international language cannot definitely be characterized as either destructive or constructive; which may be excused, anyway, as his subject is "The proper habit of English." Karl Vossler in *The Spirit of Language* gibes at Esperanto and Ido. Paget in *Human Speech*, p. 250, says: "Esperanto and Ido are both inflected languages . . . therefore, from a linguistic point of view . . . already out of date!" (my italics). This is an example of "saying anything", and one wonders just what he means. By inflection he probably means word building by means of affixes. And he can have had little experience if he imagines that humans will rest satisfied with a language so highly disjunctive that every separable particle of meaning must be conveyed by a



separate word. Such a contraption would very soon be voted out of date.

The renowned philologist, Otto Jespersen, who worked for many years in the Ido movement from its inception ( though he has later tried, though without success hitherto, to captivate the world with a less strict and logic-inspired system, Novial ) has thus described an ideal language: "An ideal language would always express the same thing by the same — and similar things by similar means; any irregularity or ambiguity would be banished; sound and sense would be in perfect harmony; any number of delicate shades of meaning could be expressed with equal ease; poetry and prose, beauty and truth, thinking and feeling would be equally provided for: the human spirit would have found a garment combining freedom and gracefulness, fitting it closely, yet allowing full play to any movement." And Paget, above criticised, adds: "Advancement and clarifying of thought itself and the extension, in power, of human reason."

We think we love our national language, our mother tongue. But though English has great virtues, it has great defects. It is unmusical in its vowel sounds, and consequently monotonous. I have come to think that this is a result of accenting words near their beginning rather than at the end, as in French, or on the last syllable but one, which is the best place, I believe, for producing musical speech. Compare *reparable* with *reparable*, *theatre* with *theatre*; we mumble and twitter the loveliest words into drabotony! Recently the radio an-



nouncers have been regaling us with foreign names foreignly pronounced: *Uruguayan*, *Montevideo*. But oh, the poor Turkish capital Englishly pronounced: *Ankara*! I incline to think that it is the drabness of English pronunciation that causes people to indulge in all kinds of extravagant vowel sounds in the various dialects, sprawling monsters, monophthongs, diphthongs, triphthongs, of many kinds, and ill-educated (!) people to say *reparable*, *theatre* etc. In many respects English is ugly. The international language will assuredly be a musical and beautiful speech. Man's irresistible impulse to know his own thought and his struggle to express and communicate it will inevitably cause him to create a more exalted and luminous language than any now extant.

So much for this question of the new world order and of the necessity of a world language, particularly of a unified world-medium for thought-communication. But there is another immensely important side to this vast, though essentially simple, matter. How is it all to be started, promoted? And by whom? We are faced with problems of action, responsibility, personality, leadership. All problems are basically individual problems; all reforms are ultimately reforms of persons: the creative power is inherent in and works through individual humans, through women and men. And we, as individuals, faced with the proposition that it is up to us to remake the world, inevitably look around for something a bit smaller to remake first! The answer — the only true one — is of course, as already implied:

we must remake ourselves individually. And this must certainly be accepted and the undertaking — an ages-long one — be begun. And “no man liveth to himself”, and the undertaking of self-reform actually involves the process of others-reform, environment-reform, world-reform! We seem to be back where we commenced, but this, however, seems clear: world-reform and self-reform are essentially mutually dependent processes. And it is here that to some minds the cause of a nation seems to offer the natural solution to the problems which seem to be raised by this tremendous Earth and Man inter-relationship. The particular solution seems the more romantic and alluring to idealistic minds of a certain type if the nation is a small and (capitalistictly) poor one, more so still if it is a nation included in the territory of an imperialistic, perhaps alien, State, that is to say, if it is a nation without its own corresponding coextensive State. Nation reform seems to offer a heaven-sent middle way, the perfect unifying medium, between world-reform and self-reform. But the idea is a delusion; as I have said, all the nationhoods are at present too helplessly and hopelessly enslaved by the deadly machinery of capitalist Statism. No: a careful study of conditions to-day will reveal the fact *that groupism is the vital implement, the true medium way, that men are seeking; and that this groupism is of at least two kinds (duality again!): (a) the far-flung world-wide common-thought group (corresponding to vertical, being) and (b) the local social common-life group (corresponding to horizontal, action).* Such, in my view,

is our true way forward in the political organizational sphere; and nationhoods must be left in Divine Nature's keeping. The (a) groups may be "primary groups" of Heavens in Their inspiration and leading of humankind; the (b) groups would be the "primary groups" of Earth-life, familiar to students of sociology. Through such groups Earth's myriadfold natural leaderships would arise, and the true principle within democracy and the true principle within the idea of dictatorship would together find their own Human and Divine fulfillment.

One would think that we must say goodbye for ever to the winsome particular beauties of the Scotch voice, the French voice, the Welsh, Spanish, Dutch, Jewish, English, Negro, Chinese, Russian, Italian, Canadian, German, Brazilian and all the other voices? That the multitudinous variety of accent, intonation, vowel sound, legato and staccato and the rest must be banished forever from our ears? But not so, a thousand times not so! *Quite the reverse.* The use of international language would not alter the physique and voice of men. A language like Ido would be understood readily all the world over whatever kind of a man or woman spoke it. Yet the hearers of the radio anywhere would soon realize when the voice speaking was Irish, Japanese, Hindu, Zulu or what not. *As never before they would learn to know and prize the varieties of humankind.* And they would begin to inquire within themselves concerning the meanings inwrought in multitudinous humanhood. *The day of real nationalism, regionalism, racialism, tribal-*

*ism would have dawned.* Though men would speak to each other in one language they would still speak it with many tongues; though men would begin to think the one Human Thought they would each express it with the fervour of their own heart's blood, out of the rhythms of their own beloved plot of Heaven and Earth.

Man must go forward to perfection in each and every stage of his vast-ordained evolution. Perfection not being a final and fixed thing, but rather the perpetually unfolding state of right adjustment to ideal and environment at every point on the endless Path. Logic, science and language are all aides and means to man's perfection. All fully developed men are scientists, for science is simply the organized application of common sense method. One day Man's reason will be healed, exalted and illumined; Man will know the Mind of the Divine and because of that will speak a language born of his life, outflowing from between heart and head ensphered by the Gods.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

#### A Hindu Legend

In the morning of the world man, glorying in his power and immortality, so prevailed, through his quality of activity, that he menaced the sovereignty of the gods themselves, and therefore they took away his immortality and afflicted him with death. But when they debated among themselves where they should hide his captured godhead they were at a loss. For they said, "Man is a mighty hunter: if we hide it on the highest mountain he will climb it; if we bury it deep in the earth there he will dig; or if we sink it in the sea he will explore its bottom --- there is no place in which he will not seek." But Brahma said, "Give it to me and I will hide it where he will never think to look for it." They asked him where this might be and he would not tell them, but he hid man's divinity within man himself, and it is indeed there that he does not think to seek, but goes unrestingly up and down the world looking for his lost godhead, overcome by death again and again.

— From *The New Image*  
by Claude Bragdon

## MUSICAL RECORDINGS RECEIVED



*Reviewed by*  
JOHN LYNES

We have received from Decca its set of recordings titled *Two Thousand Years of Music*. This set, edited by Dr. Curt Sachs, and subtitled *A Compact History*, fleetingly traces the development of melody and harmony from antique Greek songs and Hebrew chants on through to the elaborate polyphony of Palestrina and Bach. The set concludes with the well-known harpsichord piece by Rameau, *La Poule*, as if Dr. Sachs meant to imply that music after Bach isn't to be taken seriously. The twelve ten-inch records which form the set are now being offered, without album, at the extremely low price of \$6. It is really an exceptional bargain and would enhance any music library.

We do regret, however, that there is not an informative booklet to accompany the set. It commences with the pagan Greek song *Skolion of Seiklios*, of which we have no knowledge. Following this is the famous *Hymn to Apollo*, a pæan composed by an Athenian to celebrate the repulse of the Goths in 279 B.C. Next are the ancient Hebrew chants: *Kaddish for Passover*; *Aboda for the Day of Atonement*; and *Reading from the Book of Esther*. Continuing, we come upon the *Gradual* from the Gregorian Chants; the *Pilgrim's Song*, an example of early polyphonic music of the 12th century; songs of *The Troubadours* and *The Minnesinger*; early Nether-

land chorals, among which is Josquin des Prés *Et Incarnatus est*, a profoundly beautiful work that of itself is worth the price of the entire set; German chorals of the 16th century; the polyphonic chorals of Palestrina; madrigals of Germany and Italy; early German dances; early harpsichord music, some of which is played on ancient instruments of the period; and chamber music of Bach, Handel, and Rameau.

#### HARPSICHORD RECITAL

You may have seen and heard Alice Ehlers play Mozart's *Rondo Alla Turca* in the cinema "Wuthering Heights." She is now presented by Decca in a harpsichord recital of 17th and 18th century dances. A representative collection, this album includes a pavane, gagliarda, courante, gavotte, sarabande, passepied, gigue, passacaglia, and rondo, written by composers dating from William Byrd to Mozart.

These pieces were not written for actual dancing, despite their titles. They do, however, employ the characteristic rhythms and spirit of the dances of that period much as Ravel used the ballroom waltz as the basis for his stylized *La Valse*. Miss Ehler's playing is best characterized by a quote from the notes included with the album: "The old masters were not sentimental; they wrote organic, carefully integrated music to which the expression — and the expression is no less genuine — is bound. Their music demands the correct, not the 'inspired' performance, in which feeling and expression are emphasized for their own sake." (Decca Album No. 61, \$2.75)

#### DECCA RECORDINGS OF NATIVE AFRICAN TRIBAL SONGS

Aside from a few fragments of Greek melodies, written records of pre-Christian music have failed to survive the centuries. We may presume that rhythm came first. Combine a drum-beat with the varying pitch of an emotional speaker and music is the result.



In the same way that anthropologists use the Australian bushman of the present for examples of what pre-historic man may have been, how he reacted, learned to make sounds into a language, etc., the present day student of musical development may use the music of African tribes to trace the growth of melody.

For many years research of African music was a difficult proposition. Explorers and missionaries returned to civilization with vivid accounts of native music, sometimes a written record. However, such accounts were not to be trusted because the native rhythms and pitch intervals were generally too strange to be accurately transcribed by the explorer.

Recently, some effort has been made to record on the spot representative music of several African tribes. The results are not only interesting to students but better still are exciting for the layman. Decca has sixteen-inch records available (Nos. 20140 to 20145 incl.) priced at 50 cents per record.

Of these, two are outstanding — those of the Yoruba tribe. These people, who live in Nigeria, use the familiar folk song scale found all over the world: the penta-tonic (the five black keys on the piano, in various relationships). They use these basic notes for their singing. The accompanying drums and xylophonic instruments beat out an intricate background. At first hearing, they seem to accomplish nothing more than a hit-and-miss tune with an incongruous accompaniment. But if you can put aside your heritage of European music and listen again attentively you'll discover a definite pattern and form. And more than that, you'll sense the exuberance of these people, their freedom from inhibitions and frustrations, and their emotional genuineness.

Also included are songs of the Haussa, Swahili, and Ibani tribes. The first two of these show a tendency towards Semitic and Arabian music, and the last, the



Ibani, are reportedly imitators of the white colonists, and their songs reveal an amusing combination of European and African ideas.

All six records seem to have been recorded under ideal conditions. Accoustically, they are excellent. In several of them the singing seems to be echoing through the hills and forests adjoining the native village, and makes what would be a defect in a symphonic recording a realistic effect.

#### VICTOR RECORDS

Rather than review all of the new releases since the last appearance of *The Phoenix*, recommending some, rejecting others, the basic result of which would amount to little more than a listing, we prefer to choose in particular three albums of chamber music which we feel are especially valuable additions to any record library. These are two quintets of Brahms and a Beethoven quartet.

The two Brahms albums are the string quintet in G, opus 111 (Victor M-184, \$5) recorded by the Budapest Quartet and Hans Malke, violist; and the clarinet quintet, opus 115 (Victor M-491, \$8.50) recorded by the Busch Quartet and Reginald Kell, clarinetist. Both of these works were written in the last seven years of Brahms' life. The string or "viola" quintet is one of the least performed works of Brahms, yet to our mind it ranks along with the clarinet quintet at the very top of his chamber music. Some musicologists claim it was to have been a 5th symphony which Brahms failed to find time to write. No matter — it is a joy from the beginning of its waltz-like first movement to the end of the boisterous Hungarian finale. The clear, firm tone of the Budapest Quartet and their well chosen tempi make as good a recording as could be desired.

Both Mozart and Brahms found the combination of clarinet and string quartet to be a happy one. Cer-

tainly no other instrument blends as well with strings, probably because the great range of dynamic possibilities of the clarinet enables the performer to dominate the ensemble or if necessary to play as softly as a muted violin. The Brahms clarinet quintet has long ago exhausted the superlatives of critics and is today recognized as one of the really great chamber music works. The above recording is as fine a performance as we have ever heard. The Busch quartet is at its best and Reginald Kell should be placed among the first contemporary interpretative artists. We hope that Victor will engage him to record the two Brahms clarinet sonatas and the Trio, opus 114.

The Beethoven quartet is No. 1, opus 18 (Victor M-550, \$5) recorded by the Coolidge Quartet. Despite the fact that Beethoven was only twenty-eight (young for Beethoven) when this was written, it shows less of the influence of Mozart and Haydn than is found in his early sonatas and trios and clearly points the way toward the three Rausumowsky and the later quartets. The Coolidge Quartet plays it in a decidedly virile fashion. Victor plans to have them record the whole Beethoven series of sixteen quartets.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

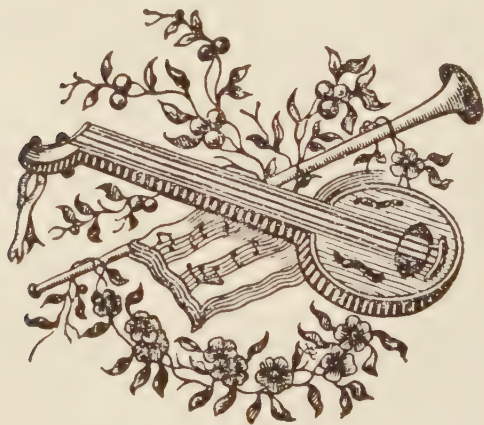
I want to include here, along with John Lynes reviews of chamber music, a notice of an album which we have long desired to have and which we recently added to our collection of records: Mozart's piano quartet in G minor (Victor M-251, \$8.50) recorded superbly by Artur Schnabel and the Pro Arte Quartet.

This work is of such exquisite beauty that in trying to convey intimations of it one is starkly confronted by the inadequacy of the written word. Surely if music embodies — as it does for many of us — the mystical visions and prophecies of humanity's unfolding

cosmic destiny, then no more radiant testimony of this ordained destiny can be found than in this quartet of Mozart's. This human destiny which whispers unceasingly, like the murmur of the sea in a sea-shell, through the music and literature and arts of the centuries, apocalyptically singing of the approaching glorious symphony of peace and harmony and loving joy amongst all nations, races, and creeds of mankind. The ordained brotherhood of humanity.

In listening to this music of Mozart, just as in listening to the previously mentioned Beethoven string quartet and the Brahms clarinet quintet, one cannot refrain from applying those luminous words: *It is not ye that sing, Mozart, but the spirit of thy Father which singeth in thee.*

J.P.C.





AN OPEN LETTER FROM FRIEDA LAWRENCE  
TO MR. TINDALL \*

Dear Mr. Tindall,

I read your book with great interest. It made me laugh when you could not explain by "fashion or reason" that Ursula wears red or green stockings. Can't you imagine that she did it for fun and that red stockings might look attractive in the snow?

Was not the purpose of your book to show that Lawrence was a fool and you much too smart to swallow him?

But was he such a fool to hate the machine and try to give a new meaning, or an ancient one, to his fellow-men of the world around them. Had the English accepted Lawrence, Lady Chatterly and all, they would not have gone to war again.

How you detest him! How unfair you are!

That his vision was not his own, but he sneaked bits from others and cooked them up as his own!

He never stayed with Mrs. Nutall, for instance, never had books out of her library, only the one she gave him. We lunched there three times. Also, he knew

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\**Editor's Note:* Dr. William Y. Tindall, author of the recent book *D. H. Lawrence and Susan, his Cow* is a half-cocked assistant professor of English Literature at Columbia University.

nothing of an Indian general and a Harvard widow. Your Dr. Vaillant is mistaken.

In his novels the events are based on facts, they are not theories; your theory of *Women in Love* as Bunyan is bunk to me.

He was not a fascist. When an Englishwoman shot Mussolini through the nose, Lawrence said: "Why don't they put a ring through it?"

He had nothing to do with politics, he just wanted to be free to have his own individual relationship with anything in creation.

How can you say Virginia Woolf is a better artist? Aldous said of her: A highly decorated vacuum.

I think Lawrence's day is yet to come, even your book proves it.

I am old and alone now, but he left me the glow of his world. That makes me feel rich, richer than ever your wife will be with all your cleverness.

*Frieda Lawrence*



## SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES

*"And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into spades: nation shall not take sword against nation: neither shall they learn war any more."*

### — AN EDITORIAL —

Last September, shortly after we had sent out the issue preceeding this sorely delayed one, the new European War broke out. At first we were paralyzed with grief, then, when we had in some measure recovered from the terrible psychic shock, we set to work hurriedly in an effort to organize all the so-called liberal and radical publications into a united front against the War and the war-makers.

We were, at this time, in total ignorance of the activities of already existent organizations which were genuinely opposing War and the underlying causes of War. Apart from a few friends and comrades, with whom we were in touch through correspondence, we felt horribly isolated and alone.

And we realize, now, how naive our first efforts were. They consisted in my writing and sending the following letter to the editors of such magazines as *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *Partisan Review*, *The Modern Quarterly*, etc. —

Sept. 1939

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to you in the hope that you will be willing to spread word through your publication that the quarterly magazine **THE PHOENIX**, of which I am the American editor, is now dedicated to an uncompromising opposition to War and the war-makers.

I realize, of course, that your journal and ours have widely divergent convictions concerning the nurturing of a new order of

society which must emerge out of the anguishing disintegration and chaos of the present one. But these divergences are, I feel, of secondary importance --- at least they are at the present time. What is, or what should be, of primary importance between journals such as ours at the present stage of the seemingly inexorable tragedy of this crumbling civilization is a kindred horror and loathing and unalterable opposition to War.

We are not at all fully acquainted with your stand against War, but we are deeply interested in learning of it. As for ourselves we are unequivocally opposed to War in ALL its aspects, but especially to the conscription part of it. We shall never admit the right of any government to force its citizens to partake in War in any way when such action violates their moral convictions. And for our part, we shall never submit to this, even though the only alternatives be imprisonment or death.

There are undoubtedly some men (although we are convinced that they are a minority, for we feel certain that the majority are coerced through their own ignorance or cowardice) who of their own free volition partake in War. And of such men we have nothing to say, except this: Let them go to War then, but only on the condition that they keep their War, with its slaughter and destruction, strictly within the confines of such opposing camps of men who have voluntarily become their enemies. Otherwise, we dedicate our lives and THE PHOENIX to combatting them by every moral means within our power.

And although it is so late, with a sort of psychic twilight of War gloom already shrouding this country, and with a heartsickening sadness and discouragement gripping all men and women who abhor War, yet we may be able --- *Deo volente* --- to rally together and by our united efforts change the course of the seemingly inevitable catastrophic drift of events.

And even if we can't, even if we must perish before an overwhelming onslaught of the of the allied forces of degenerate brutality, murderous greed, stupidity, ignorance, and cowardice, then at least we can still do this: we can stand together and meet our deaths in brave defiance, fortified by the faith that our creative deaths shall make a breach in the seemingly impregnable walls of this entombing, life-stifling, order of world society.

Dead men do tell tales! The words of all the heroic men who went forth and who --- despite their superficially conflicting creeds and visions of a new order of human society --- fought to their deaths with just and moral weapons against the tomb-stone forces of brutality greed, stupidity, and cowardice --- the words of these heroic men are still with us, still audible in the midst of the present frenzied cacaphony of machine-guns, bombing planes, and



cannons: the gargantuan death-rattle of this false, doomed, money-grubbing materialistic order, with its colossal and soon to be smashed conceit that it can frustrate the ordained commonwealth and brotherhood of humanity. Corrupt, murderous governments, with their bribed Judases, their death-sentencing Pontius-Pilates, and their hired assassins will never be able to silence the heroes of humanity. For just as the Sun is an unquenchable source of renewed physical life, so too are the words and the creative deaths of heroes an inexhaustible fount of renewed hope and courage to men of faith and integrity. And just as the Sun forever conquered that once colossal enemy of the Earth and its creatures --- the Ice Age --- with its threat to extinguish all life on this planet, so too can we who are truly sons of the Lord of the Sun vanquish the present spiritual Ice Age that is daring to threaten the destiny of humanity.

And if the choice comes upon us, let us not --- in exchange for the ignominious and slim chance of clinging to our physical existence --- surrender or betray our most precious life-heritage: our bitterly won vision of human life, passed on to us with such heroism and sacrifice, and allow it to be trampled in the filth of those who have already betrayed that heritage.

It is not physical death that should fill our hearts with terror, but moral death. Let us pray, then, for the strength and the courage needed to defend our life-heritage safely into our graves, from whence it will burgeon forth just as surely as do those visible manifestations of the Earth's fecundity: the grass and the flowers. Let us live as men and die as men, rather than be debased into barren creatures whom neither the Sun nor the Lord nor the heroes of humanity can fecundate with a renaissance.

Apart from the Editors of *The Nation*, who sent us a stereotyped card acknowledging our letter and regretting being unable to answer it or afford it any space in their Correspondence Section, and the Editors of *Partisan Review*, who said that they admired our stand but that it did not make "political sense", we met with only a cold silence. In bitterness, we realized how little could be hoped from these quarters where the poseurs of the political-literary cliques hypocritically babble about their allegiance to the struggle for the freedom of humanity.

Our next step, taken while still in unhappy ignorance of the already existing organizations struggling against War, was an attempt to organize a widespread League outside of the sterile literary cliques. We decided to name this *The Non-Conscriptable League*, and we drew up the following as its *Manifesto and Covenant*:

I hereby openly make known to my fellow-countrymen and to the officials of this government that I am unequivocally opposed to War in all its aspects, but especially to conscription into War-service. And now, at this time of furious assault against the integrity of the human spirit and in affirmation of the sanctity of my own conscience I solemnly pledge that despite all possible future threats of imprisonment, persecution, or death I shall not only defy but also resist by every moral means within my power any attempt to force me to partake in the insane chaos of War's destruction and murder.

Furthermore, I solemnly pledge to defend and succour to the very utmost of my resources any of my fellow members who are oppressed or in need because of their loyalty to this League.

And even though this country refrains from military action in War and yet legalizes the selling of materials to be used for murder and destruction by nations at War, I solemnly pledge to boycott all the products of firms and industries which thus become accomplices of War. And if I am employed in any industry which in such manner becomes allied with the forces of War, I solemnly pledge to immediately seek employment elsewhere.

To which I sign my name on this.....day of....., 1939

We set up and printed a large number of these Manifestos and mailed them to every possible source of publicity, and to some degree we were successful. Radio commentators spoke of the NCL, *Life* magazine published a partial facsimile of the Manifesto, the *New Republic* condescended to mention us as "a new wrinkle on the Pacifist front," and the reactionary editor of our local village paper lumped us with Bergdoll, the draft-dodger, and carried an article on the need of cleaning the community and the country of pacifists, communists, and all such enemies of Uncle Sam.

At any rate, we began to receive numerous enquiries through the mails, but since there was only my wife and myself to carry on this work, we soon began to suffer under the nervous strain of our pressing responsibilities. We had hoped and felt so certain that as soon as word spread of the NCL, men and women would volunteer to help us carry on the work involved. But no one came to help us. Often we were held up in the correspondence that arose over the miserable lack of money for postage. Worst of all, though, only a small percentage of all the people who wrote in for further details of the NCL were ready to sign the Covenant. Most were never heard from again after we had sent off replies to them.

And so, finally, we were driven, in utter sadness, to admit that the work involved was beyond our physical capacities and material means, and that we would have to content ourselves to move within the limitations of our resources and carry on our struggle against War and the underlying causes of War through the pages of *The Phoenix*.

And although our efforts, from this recital, might sound quite discouraging and fruitless, they were in reality not so at all. For through the correspondence arising from the NCL we got into communication with Robert Williams, editor of the Chicago magazine *Creative Writing*. We have neither the time nor the space left to tell here of our unreserved admiration for Robert Williams and the work he is doing. We do, though, urge our readers to subscribe to his magazine and to acquaint themselves with one of the very, very few vital periodicals in this country. (A notice of it appears in the back section of this issue. ) Williams informed us of the *War Resisters League* and urged us to affiliate with them, as he was doing. For quite some time, though, we neglected to follow his advice — chiefly

because I was under the false impression that the *War Resisters League* was only a negative organization, and that it had no affirmative stand. It seemed pointless to us to join with a league that claimed to be resisting war without also striving to eradicate the causes of war. And we were still chafing under our restricted struggle within the confines of the "little magazine" sphere. We wanted to carry our struggle out into the masses of workers and farmers who never read "little magazines." Derek Savage, with whom we were in constant communication, sent us several copies of the English weekly Pacifist paper *Peace News*. And we began planning an American pacifist weekly paper which would be able to reach a broad front of readers and sow the seeds of a positive, affirmative Pacifist movement here. We intended to ask various wealthy people who were publicly opposed to War to aid us in starting this weekly paper on a widespread scale, and issue *The Phoenix* as an optional quarterly supplement. Until Williams unexpectedly, late in February, sent us a copy of *The Conscientious Objector*, a new paper being published by allied American pacifist groups (see notice in back). Immediately, we realized there was no need of a Pacifist newspaper in this country beyond this one, and that we should do all we could to aid in its growth.

A few days before receiving *The Conscientious Objector* we had a letter from Abraham Kaufman, Executive Secretary of the *War Resisters League* in America, enquiring about *The Phoenix* and our stand against War. And curiously enough, on the same morning that we received the copy of *The Conscientious Objector*, we also received the current issue of *Creative Writing* which contains the *War Resisters International Declaration And Statement of Principles*. Upon reading this we realized, to our most joyous amazement, that the *War Resisters League* — a far-flung international organization found-

ed in 1923, and with an enrolled membership of close to 20,000 in this country alone — embodied all the fundamental goals of our own struggle, even to the believing in that which was most stressed in *The Phoenix* before the War: *the need and efficacy of agrarian communes as a way of pioneering into a New Order of world society*. For in the correspondence that ensued between ourselves and the leaders of the *War Resisters League* of America, we proposed an extension of their present activities through the formation of agrarian communes, and they responded warmly to the proposal. The Editor of *The Conscientious Objector*, Jay Nelson Tuck, wrote to us:

"Your idea for land communes sounds to me like an excellent one. A somewhat similiar plan is now in operation --- has been for some time, in fact --- by the Quakers. They are at work setting up homestead projects in a number of different parts of the country. I am somewhat familiar with one in Pennsylvania . . . an attempt is being made to provide for miners and their families who are suffering from unemployment and the poverty that is possible only in a technological civilization. The Friends are building homesteads with the co-operation of these people and starting them on their way toward co-operative agrarian living. The initial labor is contributed by young Quakers and the miners themselves and the project has done real wonders for certain sections of the state . . ."

And the Secretary of the *War Resisters League* in America, Jessie Wallace Hughan, wrote:

"I think your plan for cooperative groups of pacifists is a fine one, if it could be put through. It means money, however. All that we could do is to spread the suggestion and it may strike some group with the means to carry it out."

We ought to mention at this point, for it will add meaning to the letter just quoted, how astonishing it was to us, and further testimony — though none was needed — of the uncompromising integrity of the *War Resisters League* to learn that during their humanly holy struggles for the past fifteen years in this country they

"have not been able to find any people of means to help" them with their work or with founding a publication. "With no endowment and no large contributors, officered by persons whose energies are already taxed with other responsibilities in work for a better world" the *League* undauntedly carries on its apostolic work.

Writing of the "definite turning of the radical peace movement towards the *personal and immediate* boycott of war" (which Giono so passionately urges through *the refusal to obey* and the implications of which Savage carries further into the affirmative domain of *revolutionary pacifism*.) Jessie W. Hughan says:

"It marks a clear trend toward realism resulting from the disillusionment of 1914-1918. A generation of polite peace lobbying culminated in the most savage war of history. Four years of liberal proposals for a just settlement were scrapped in favor of the iniquities of Versailles. Governments not yet recovered from one futile tragedy are now proceeding to rush blindly along the pathway to the next. The old-line peace advocates continue to request militarists to give up their respective advantages in land, sea, and air armaments and to yield a portion of their sovereignty to the world state. The war resistance movement has lost faith in these requests. It demands, and puts force into its demands: the force of the strike, of standing with hands folded, the force of withholding supplies, which brought King John and King Charles to submission and compelled Louis XVI to convoke the Estates-General. The movement is still in its infancy, counting its tens of thousands where hundreds of thousands are required. But in its twenty years of existence it has stirred to bitter persecution the war departments of the powers, which only smile tolerantly at the efforts of peace liberals. It has worried into a growl the war monster who has been growing in strength and savagery for twenty centuries."

And we of *The Phoenix*, who have now allied ourselves with the *War Resisters League*, feel that we can most efficaciously serve the *League* by working towards the formation of agrarian communes, and so once again we appeal to those of our readers who may be able to aid us in obtaining farmlands. We believe that such communes would serve as seeds in translating into the



earthly, material domain an affirmation of the fundamental spiritual and religious and moral concepts that are embodied by the *War Resisters League's* struggle against War and the underlying causes of War, namely: the present world form of class society, with its private-profit motivation, and the resulting evils of "egoism and greed . . . hatred and antagonism" which it has sown in varying degrees in the hearts of all of us. And we believe that these agrarian communes would not only create oases in the terrible desert of the modern world but that they would also serve to *stem* the ever-spreading erosion of human life under the present cruel system of industrial exploitation. For they would bring in-to being microcosmic healing centers which would gradually radiate through society, and pioneering renaissance Easterwards into the world-commune of humanity they would aid in revealing to humanity its ordained macrocosmic destiny: the blessed peace, bounty, fulfillment, and untold profusion of joys which will burgeon forth from our long denied and frustrated acceptance of that which has always underlain and is now transcending the false barriers of race, creed, class, nations — the communal brotherhood of mankind.





## WAR RESISTERS' INTERNATIONAL DECLARATION

*“War is a crime against humanity. We therefore are determined not to support any kind of war and to strive for the removal of all causes of war.”*

### THE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

#### *War is a Crime Against Humanity*

It is a crime against life, and uses human personalities for political and economic ends.

*We, Therefore,*

actuated by an intense love for mankind,

*Are Determined Not to Support*

either directly by service of any kind in the army, navy or air forces, or indirectly by making or consciously handling munitions or other war material, subscribing to war loans or using our labour for the purpose of setting others free for war service,

*Any Kind of War*

aggressive or defensive, remembering that modern wars are invariably alleged by Governments to be defensive.

Wars would seem to fall under four heads:

- (a) *Wars to defend the State* to which we nominally belong and wherein our home is situated. To refuse to take up arms for this end is difficult:
  - 1. Because the State will use all its coercive powers to make us do so.
  - 2. Because our inborn love for home has been deliberately identified with love of the State in which it is situated.
- (b) *Wars to preserve the existing order of society* with its security for the privileged few. That we would never take up arms for this purpose goes without saying.
- (c) *Wars on behalf of the oppressed proletariat*, whether

for its liberation or defense. To refuse to take up arms for this purpose is most difficult:

1. Because the proletarian regime, and, even more, the enraged masses, in time of revolution would regard as a traitor anyone who refused to support the New Order by force.
2. Because our instinctive love for the suffering and the oppressed would tempt us to use violence on their behalf.

(d) *War organized under the auspices of the League of Nations* in the name of Sanctions to defend the Covenant or to maintain Collective Security against a so-called Aggressor State.

However, we are convinced that violence cannot really *preserve order, defend our home, liberate the proletariat or give security* to any nation. In fact, experience has shown that in all wars, order, security and liberty disappear, and that, so far from benefiting by them, the proletariat always suffers most. We hold, however, that consistent pacifists have no right to take up a merely negative position, but *must recognize*

AND STRIVE FOR THE REMOVAL OF ALL CAUSES OF WAR.

We recognize as causes of war not only the instinct of egoism and greed, which is found in every human heart, but also all agencies which create hatred and antagonism between groups of people. Among such, we would regard the following as the more important to-day:

1. Differences between *races*, leading by artificial aggravation to envy and hatred
2. Differences between *religions*, leading to mutual intolerance and contempt.
3. Differences between the *classes*, the possessing and the non-possessing, leading to civil war, which will continue so long as the present system of producing

exists, and private profit rather than social need is the outstanding motive of society.

4. Differences between *nations*, due largely to the present system of production, leading to world wars and such economic chaos as we see today, which eventualities, we are convinced, could be prevented by the adoption of a system of world economy which had for its end the well-being of the entire human race.
5. Finally, we see an important cause of war in the prevalent misconception of the State. The State exists for man, not man for the State. The recognition of the sanctity of human personality must become the basic principle of human society. Furthermore, the State is not a sovereign self-contained entity, as every nation is part of the great family of mankind. We feel, therefore, that consistent pacifists have no right to take up a merely negative position, but must devote themselves to abolishing classes, barriers between the people, and to creating a world-wide brotherhood founded on mutual service.

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NOTE: Any of our readers wanting to join the *War Resisters League* or desiring further information should address their communications to: Jessie W. Hughan, Secretary, 171 West 12th Street, New York City



## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JEAN GIONO is an outstanding figure in the international pacifist movement. He is of the French peasantry, a native of the mountainous Provencal, which he has luminously portrayed in his novels. Two of these have been translated into English: *Song of the World* and *Harvest*. From the latter was adapted the famous cinema of the same title, now showing in American theatres. Giono was imprisoned in France for bravely calling upon his government and his countrymen to immediately halt their part in the present war. We urge all those who share Giono's convictions to send their individual protests against his arrest and imprisonment to the French government.

JOSEPH POLLET who did the chief work in the translation of Giono's essay, is a Swiss painter, now dwelling on his farm here in Woodstock with his wife and infant son. (He has two grown daughters.) He was born in 1897, came to America in 1911, studied with John Sloane and at the Art Students' League, of New York City. During the years of 1929 — 1931 he continued his studies in Europe. In 1930 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. There is a mural of his in the Pontotoc, Mississippi Post Office, the subject being a banquet which De Sota gave the Indian chiefs of that region. A current show of his paintings is now taking place at the Julian Levy Gallery, in New York City, and will continue until March 18th.

DEREK SAVAGE is an English poet, in his early twenties. He was summoned to join the British army this January, refused to obey, was brought before a military tribunal, and at his trial won an unconditional exemption. Savage has had two volumes of his poems published: *Autumn World* and *Don Quixote*. He is mar-

ried and has an infant son. He and his family were to have joined us here last summer, but because of their poor financial assets they were refused entrance on a permanent visa. And before we could arrange to have a person of means vouch for their care in case of illness or material need, so that this government's munificent Aid societies would not be called upon to hand out a few crumbs to alien human beings, the war broke out. Savage, who had resigned from his job in London, sold his furniture, and given up his flat in full expectation of taking up his life here with us, was left stranded. He wrote to us, shortly after this shattering of our mutual hopes and plans: "I have learned to accept not merely with resignation but with something more the decisions of Fate in regard to my personal movements and the disposal of general events. I do not therefore regard this war as merely fortuitous, and likewise I do not so consider my detention in this country of my birth. It is difficult to see how this society, with all its pent-up evils and crimes could have continued without such an explosion as this some time or another. And although this explosion into war is deadly and evil and must be resisted (for we must prove ourselves worthy of peace by desiring it), yet its effects may, for all we know, besides being agonizing and terrible in the extreme, measured in terms of human misery and suffering, have the effect of cleansing and liberating the hearts of men. And even, perhaps, this very suffering may be an atonement for smugness, hypocrisy, blindness and insensitivity. I do not use these words lightly, you will understand. I do not welcome this war. But I see moving behind it some great, and mysterious purpose whose meaning it is impossible for us with our finite understanding to grasp. And so, in a smaller, microscopic way, with my own existence. I am content to assume that there is some purpose in my enforced

stay in this country which is at war. It would, at any rate, be morally impossible for me to leave England at such a time as this, for it would in a way be a denial of my own destiny, which I cannot altogether disentangle from my country's. When all is said and done, I am English, I have roots of a kind here, and a history reaching right back through the Great War, Queen Victoria, The Industrial Revolution, and the Civil Wars. I must see this movement in its ( perhaps ) final contortions before I am at liberty to detach myself and strike out a fresh line elsewhere. In other words, I feel there is a struggle here in which I have a part to play, and a lesson of experience which I must learn. At the present moment I actually feel that it is *better* for one of us to be in Europe than for both of us to be in America . . . Let us pray that the war will be a short one . . . ”

JAMES THOMSON is the pseudonym of one of the contributors to *The Phoenix* who prefers to remain anonymous. His story *Tumbleweed* appeared in Vol. I no. 2.

FRANK KENDON is “an elder poet who lives in Cambridge”, according to word received from Savage, who forwarded us his poem. We hope to learn more of Kendon and to publish further of his writings.

ANNAIS NIN is a Spanish woman, author of *D.H. Lawrence (An unprofessional study)*; *The House of Incest*; and *The Winter of Artifice*. She is now living in New York, having been driven from her abode in France by the war. Her father is the well-known Spanish composer, Joaquin Nin, and her brother, the violinist Joaquin Nin-Culmell, is now a rising name in the American concert world.

DILYS BENNETT LAING sends us the following information about herself: “Born in North Wales, 1906; moved

with parents to Weymouth, England, 1907; moved to Canada in 1913 (my brother and I looked forward to playing with the little Eskimos and living in igloos); moved to the United States in 1929 (all this moving explained by the fact that my father is an engineer); married Alexander Laing in 1936, and came, I hope, to a geographic standstill in Vermont. Most of my distaff forbears wrote poetry of some sort, Welsh and religious; sang in choirs, or thundered heaven and hell from Welsh pulpits. Perhaps it was my father who bestowed upon me a love of structure. Certainly he counterbalanced the Celtic elements with his English blood. The Bermondsey Book and the old Palms published some of my verses years ago.

WILLIAM PETERSON wrote us early in March that he was on his way to Las Vegas to be married. He was born in San Francisco 25 years ago, spent his childhood in orphanages and charity boarding schools. His writings have appeared in the *Rocky Mountain Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *American Prefaces*, *Westminster*, *Scimitar & Song* and various other small magazines.

ROBERT SYMMES is another Californian, 21 years old, now dwelling in Annapolis, where he is co-editing the new magazine *Ritual* with Ned C. Fahs.

ELIZABETH SMART was born in Ottawa, Canada, of Red Indian, Irish, Scotch, French, German, English, and American ancestors. She has had poems published in *Canadian Poetry Magazine & Delta*, and is author of the as yet unaccepted novel *My Lover John*.

ALFRED HY. HAFFENDEN is an Englishman, author of many books, and lives in Manchester. He has had considerable experience with community experiments in England, and is a veteran gardener.



JOHN LYNES is a young American composer and plays clarinet with The Maverick String Quartet during their summer recitals here in Woodstock. He teaches music at the Putney School, in Vermont. He is married and is a resident of Woodstock.

FRIEDA LAWRENCE spends most of her time at her ranch high up on Lobo Mountain, overlooking the little Mexican village of San Cristobal, in New Mexico. She is author of the well known book *Not I, But the Wind*.

JAMES PETER COONEY is an American, one generation removed from the Irish peasantry. Thirty one years old, married. His wife, Blanche, is one of the chief contributors to *The Phoenix*, for it is she who sets up the issues by hand, most of the time practically unaided. She is 22 years old, of Russian and Roumanian parents. She is the mother of a two year-old daughter, darling Deirdre, and shall give birth to another child this Easter.

We want to express here our thanks to three of our neighbours — Abraham and Theresa Appenzeller, & Dorothy Davidsohn — for helping us with the work of this issue.

And we take this opportunity of once again asking for some young man or woman among our readers who, sharing the convictions embodied in *The Phoenix*, would be willing to come to live with us and aid us in our work.

# THE WOODSTOCK GUILD OF CRAFTSMEN

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